



FLAXIE AT THE "PREACH-MAN'S HOUSE," Page 72.



FLAXIE FRIZZLE STORIES.

FLAXIE FRIZZLE.

BY

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FLAXIE FRIZZLE.

CHAPTER I.

"THE HEAVEN-MOTHER."

HER name was Mary Gray, but they called her Flaxie Frizzle. She had light curly hair and a curly nose; that is, her nose curled up at the end a wee bit, just enough to make it look cunning. Her cheeks were rosy red, and she was so fat that when Mr. Snow, the post-master, saw her, he said "How d'ye do, Mother Bunch?"

What kind of a child was she? Well, I don't want to tell, but I suppose I shall

have to. She wasn't gentle and timid and sweet, like you little darlings,—O, not like you; and Mrs. Prim, who went to the house a great deal visiting, said she was “dreadful.” But somehow her father loved her, and her Aunt Jane loved her, and so did her sister and her brother, and everybody else that ever saw her and heard her speak. Even Mrs. Prim loved her, though Mrs. Prim said she “ran wild;” and I suppose that was true.

She might have been a better child if the whole household had not petted her, and laughed at all she said and did. There was no one to control her, for when she was two years old, just learning to talk and say, “I’s two—uz—ould,” her dear mamma was called away to heaven.

Flaxie Frizzle did not grieve at first. She always cried bitterly when a pin

pricked her, but she never shed a tear when her sweet mother died. Grandma and Aunt Jane came to keep house; the two boys went to school, and so did sister "Ninny," or Julia. Flaxie Frizzle was lonesome sometimes; and after her mother had been gone a year, she began to cry and want to see her "heaven-mamma." When she talked so, her papa looked sober and said, "So do I want to see her, too, Pinky Pearly." Pinky Pearly was her baby-name, and he liked it because his wife had chosen it. He was a doctor; and, while riding about to see sick people, he sometimes thought,—

"Ah, this is hard! To be so tired as I am, and then go home to such a sober house. But there is Pinky Pearly; she will perch on my knee and talk to me, and then I shall feel better."

The moment he opened the hall door, Pinky Pearly pattered along to meet him, and cried out cheerily,

“Smile up your face, Dr. Papa!”

And he always “smiled it up.”

“I think,” said he to grandma and Aunt Jane, “we must try to have a Christmas Tree this year, for Pinky’s sake.”

He sighed as he spoke; for he thought of the beautiful woman who had been planning one last year, the very week before she died. And grandma sighed too, as she answered,

“Yes, perhaps it will be best, for the sake of the children.”

So, three days before Christmas, Dr. Gray had a tree brought home and set in the parlor, all ready to be lighted up. Pinky Pearly heard about it. She did not

know what it meant; but that was all the better, for she kept trying to guess.

“Kismus T’ee? Kismus T’ee? Guess my heaven-mamma sended it down when it snowed. Kismus T’ee? Birdies in it, I s’pose?—O ho!”

It was hard to wait three days.

“Dr. Papa, I want to yite a letter to my mamma, ’n’ tell her ’bout it,” said she, trying to shove the big “nink-stan’” toward him, “Please, Dr. Papa, now smile up your face, and don’t you ky!”

Dr. Gray took the pen, and wrote with trembling fingers for his baby:—

“MY HEAVEN-MAMMA:—

I know you’s dead and gone to God, but I guess the postman can find you. We’s a-goin’ to have a Kismus T’ee. I wish you’s here to fits it. You s’pose, mamma, when’s you comin’ down? I

kied 'n' I kied, 'cause I want to see my mamma. I'se got two kitties in a basket, under um stove; but I want to see my mamma. Tell God 'bout it; then he'll let you come down. Tell him we's a-goin' to have a Kismus T'ee.

By bye,

PINKY PEARLY."

"There now," said the little one, nestling close to papa's shoulder, "when she comes I'll give her all the nuts and yaisins, what I saved off my plate in my pottet. 'Cause I don't want 'em, froat's so sore."

"Your throat?" said Dr. Papa. And when he took a good look at Pinky's face, he saw it was not pink, but red; and her little hands were hot. All was not right with Pinky Pearly.

Next morning it was worse still. Her breath came quick, her pulse knocked

hard, and there was a burning pain in head and throat.

“Darling must take medicine,” said Dr. Papa, looking very grave, “and then we hope God will make her all well.”

Pinky Pearly opened her sick eyes, which had bright red veins over the balls.

“How can God make me well?” said she, “Dr. Papa gived me meddis when I’s sick once, great whiles ago, and *meddis* made me well; *God* didn’t.”

Dr. Papa mixed something in a spoon and brought it along to the bed, and Pinky swallowed it like a darling.

“There,” murmured she, smiling, “now meddis make me all well.”

But when night came, and her father bent over her anxiously and asked, “How does my darling feel now?” she answered, wearily,—

"I'se isn't so better's I was, Dr. Papa."

The night was long. Dr. Gray sat in an arm-chair on one side of the bed, grandma in a rocker on the other, and Aunt Jane lay on the sofa with her clothes on.

"Dr. Papa," called Pinky, faintly, and he bent his ear down close to hear, "Why—don't—she—come? I'se *hung'y* to see my heaven-mamma. I can't wait—no—more, 'n' I'se goin' up—where—she—stays."

A dreadful pain smote through the father's heart.

"Don't, sweetest; don't talk so! Papa can't spare his darling baby."

After that he walked from room to room, and his lips were white and shut close. Every time he looked at the little face on the pillow, he thought,—

"She is asleep. Perhaps she will wake up in heaven. How can I let her go? Her mother has enough up there to make her happy, but down here I have only my baby."

Morning came at last, and Pinky Pearly opened her eyes with a smile. She had not gone yet.

"Papa, O papa," called she, "she came last night."

"Who came?" said her father, touching her cheek, and rejoicing to find it cooler.

"My heaven-mamma. She tookened me up in her lap, 'n' kissed me; and then she put me back here, and kissed me some more. She had a pretty dress on. I kied to go up where she lives."

"And leave me? Oh, my darling!"

"No, I isn't goin'! Mamma said for me to stay to this house 'n' be Dr. Papa's comfort."

"Bless my darling."

"And I telled her I'd stay to Kismus, 'cause I want to see the Kismus T'ee."

"It was a beautiful dream," said Dr. Gray; and he kissed the child with a heart full of joy.

The breath did not come so fast, the pulses knocked more softly, the pain was easier in head and throat.

Dr. Gray said to grandma,—

"Thank God, the baby is really better."

Grandma and Aunt Jane both cried for very happiness.

"I'se goin' to stay to Kismus," said the little one; "was you sorry?"

"No," said Aunt Jane; "glad; so very glad that we can't find any words to say it."

"Now I know how God makes me well," said Pinky Pearly, speaking the

words slowly, for she had been a long while thinking them out, "Dr. Papa gives me meddis, God makes meddis *mind*, and then Pinky Pearly gets all well."

"True, every word," said Dr. Papa, hugging the little white figure close to his breast.

And next night, as Pinky could not go to Kismus T'ee, Kismus T'ee was brought to Pinky; and she lay in a rose-colored wrapper and looked at it, and clapped her hands.

CHAPTER II.

THE NEW MAMMA.

THE next summer little Mary had a new mamma, and by that time the memory of her "heaven-mother" had almost faded away like a dream.

The new mamma had black hair and black eyes, and a very pleasant smile. Flaxie Frizzle had seen her a great many times, but usually with a shawl and bonnet on; and now when she came into the house with Dr. Papa, and sat down in the parlor without any bonnet, the little girl thought it rather strange.

I am sorry to say Flaxie stood by the

window killing flies. She had a way of squeezing them between her thumb and forefinger, then kissing their dead bodies and laying them down in a little pile together. The new mamma did not like to see children kill flies, but it really was droll to watch Flaxie giving her good-bye kisses, and saying in a loving tone,

“There, now, *you’s* dead!”

“Come here, Pinky Pearly, this is your new mamma,” said Dr. Papa, leading the child along to the pretty lady, and lifting her upon her lap, “I know you will love her very dearly.”

“Will I love her *this* way?” said Flaxie, smoothing Mrs. Gray’s cheeks and hair with her fingers.

She spoke in such a sweet voice, and the touch of her little hands was so soft that Mrs. Gray folded the child close to

her heart and kissed her on her pretty red lips. Dr. Papa smiled and went away.

Sister Julia and brother Preston were both there; but they did not know what to say to the strange lady. They were rather afraid of her; but little Flaxie was never afraid of anybody. "When you goin' home?" said she, patting Mrs. Gray's cheek again, and playing with her gold ear-rings.

"This is my home, now, dear little Flaxie," replied the new mamma in a low voice. "Are you willing?"

"Yes um, if you'll give me the pretty fings in your ears."

"If I should give them to you, darling, they would hurt you very much. You could not wear them unless there were holes made in your little ears."

Flaxie shook her curly head.

"Don't want 'em *a* tall," said she in disgust. "Hurt folks so! Make the blood run down orfly!"

"Flaxie, here is your doll," said brother Preston, bringing along the ragged black Dinah. "Now you must sing to it."

The little girl piped up in a high key,

"There was a niggro woman,
She had a baby boy—
Dip it in cold otter—"

Too bad!" exclaimed she, stopping suddenly in her song, and hugging poor Dinah; for the very thought of dipping a baby in cold water made her pity her own baby.

"You ought to hear her say Dinah's prayers for her, when she puts her to bed," remarked Preston to Mrs. Gray. "She says Dinah is only a niggro and can't pray."

The new mother smiled, and kissed Flaxie's face, which was about as round as a full moon.

"You haven't any idea how funny she is," went on Preston, anxious to show her off. "Stand up here, Frizzy-me-jig. There now, put your hands behind you, and tell us who is the President."

"Don't know," said Flaxie with her finger in her mouth. She didn't care in the least about being shown off.

"O you naughty thing, it's U. S. Grant." Flaxie always thought that name was "*You* S. Grant;" so she repeated very solemnly, "*Me* S. Grant," which was just what Preston wanted.

"There, mother, said he, "did you hear that? Tell us again who the President is, Miss Frizzle."

"*Me* S. G'ant," lisped the little one rather crossly. She thought once was enough.

"Now what State do you live in?"

“Stet o’ New Ork!—where’s my *pinnuts*?”

“O, you can’t have any peanuts till you tell some more. The lady wants to hear you.”

“Yes I *shall* have my pinnuts,” pouted Flaxie; and she stamped her little foot so hard that the new mother saw at once it was just as Mrs. Prim had said: this baby *was* in the habit of having her own way.

Would Preston do as she commanded O yes; he emptied his pockets without another word, and the spoiled sister ate the peanuts, and scattered the shells over the carpet.

Mrs. Gray looked on and saw it all. Mrs. Prim had told her she would find Flaxie very hard to manage; but she did not intend to begin managing her yet; she must wait till they were better acquainted.

"Perhaps you would like to see something I have brought you, Miss Flaxie," said she; and looked at Julia, who brought forward a pasteboard box. Julia knew what was in it, but her little sister did not.

"You may open it, darling," said Mrs. Gray; "it is for you."

"O! O! O!" cried Flaxie, dancing up and down. She had found a doll in the box, as long as her arm, a doll that could cry loud enough to be heard in the next room.

"The doll's name is Lady Jane Gray," said the new mamma, "and I am glad to see her so much admired."

Lady Jane was dressed in the very latest fashion. She had edging on her underclothes and lace on her dress; and round her waist was a lovely pink sash. Ear-



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rings dangled from her ears, and she had a tiny watch stuck in her watch-pocket.

Surely such a Lady Jane was enough to make any child happy, and no wonder Flaxie screamed with delight.

Julia was one of the best sisters that ever lived, but she couldn't help thinking, "This new mother doesn't know much about Flaxie, or she wouldn't give her such a splendid doll! Why, Flaxie'll smash it all to pieces in a few days. A girl ought to be as much as nine or ten years old that has a doll like that!"

Julia was nine and a half, let me tell you. She little thought there was a doll for herself in her mamma's trunk that was fifty times prettier than this; a real wax doll that had frizzled hair stuck full of wee hair-pins and a comb. It had French kid boots and silk-embroidered stockings, and

a trail so long you could step on it if you walked behind it. Julia did not know of this present till next day.

“O my! O me!” said Flaxie, carrying Lady Jane Gray round and round in her arms, “If she isn’t *just* as pitty!”

Then reaching up to the new mamma she put both arms round her neck, doll and all, exclaiming,

“I love you! I love you ’cause I like you, and *that’s* because!”

“Poh, that’s a great reason, I should think,” laughed brother Preston.

But it was reason enough for Flaxie.

And now that I have told you just what Mrs. Gray said and did the first day she came into the family, I will go on and let you see how she managed with this queer little daughter, Miss Flaxie Frizzle.

CHAPTER III.

WHIZ.

ONE day, about two months after the new mamma came, Dora Whalin, the kitchen-maid, stood by the drop-table rolling out doughnuts. Flaxie was perched in a chair, drumming on the table with both hands as if it were a piano, throwing back her head at the same time, and singing as loud as she could scream.

"You're the noisiest child I ever did see. Stop now," said Dora, throwing her a bunch of raisins.

But as soon as Flaxie had eaten the raisins, she began again.

"Maww and Marfee have *just* gone along."

"There, that will do darling," said mamma, who was passing through the kitchen. "If you sing so loud you will make Dodo's head ache."

Flaxie stopped singing; but her little feelings were hurt, and she said to her mother, in a grieved tone.

"Where's Dr. Papa? *He* loves me, but *you* don't."

With that she stuck both her mischievous thumbs into a piece of dough, and held it up to be looked at.

"See, mamma, Dodo cutted a *cross-eyed* doughnut."

She called it "cross-eyed" because the hole was not quite in the middle. Mrs. Gray smiled at the funny idea; but as Flaxie had tucked the "cross-eyed doughnut" up

Dora's sleeve, she said, with displeasure, "O Miss Frizzle, must I tie those wee, wee hands?"

She did not do it; but she led Flaxie away, and left Dora in peace.

At three o'clock that afternoon, Dr. Gray was to take his wife and Aunt Jane Abbott to ride. At two, Aunt Jane came to the house with her dear little Midge.

"Dodo," said Mrs. Gray to Dora, "you must watch these children every minute; for Flaxie Frizzle is uncommonly full of mischief to-day."

"Yes'm," said Dodo; and she took the children into the nursery, resolved to do her best.

In a few minutes Flaxie rushed into the parlor, where her mother and auntie were seated, and shut the door hard. But both ladies heard a wailing in the nursery.

“What’s that noise in there?” asked mamma.

“Mid’s a-kyin’.”

“What for?”

“I striked her.”

“Why, Flaxie, what made you?”

“O, I *had* to, ’cause she wouldn’t give me the book.”

When Flaxie Frizzle did wrong, she usually said, “I had to.”

“Wasn’t Flaxie a naughty, naughty girl?”

“Yes’m;” replied the child, dropping her pretty little tow-head; but she wasn’t sorry a bit; you would know that by the funny quirk round her mouth.

Mamma saw she would have to be punished. For the first time she snipped the little pink and white hands. It was a great surprise to Miss Flaxie Frizzle, and

almost broke her heart. "O, I feel *orfly*," Dora heard her say. And by and by she crept under the kitchen table to the big dog, Rover, and said she:—

"Doggie kiss baby; baby feel very bad!" Rover licked her face, and a look of pity came into his brown eyes. It comforted Flaxie. He loved baby, and baby loved him, O, so much better than kitty, "'cause kitty had pins in her feet."

"O, I feel *orfly*," she moaned again, and stole out at the side door; while Dodo was singing to Midge. She thought she would go into the stable and tell the moolly cow how her heart ached. Bnt she forgot it when she saw her papa's horse standing at the front gate, harnessed to the carriage.

He was called "Whiz," because he travelled so fast. I don't believe there

was a horse in town that could toss his head, and fly over the road at such a rate as Whiz; and nobody dared drive him but Dr. Gray.

"Oh, ho," thought Flaxie, "guess I'll tell hossy what my mamma did to me. And she danced up to the carriage, and set her little foot on the low step. "Whoa up, hossy! Lem' me get in! My mamma snipped my hannies; make baby feel orfly."

Hossy turned round, looking very "pyeasant."

After that it didn't take two seconds for Flaxie to climb in and catch up the reins, calling out, "Dap! Dap!"

Now if Whiz had only been hitched! But as he wasn't, what could he do but go? As Flaxie would say, "he had to go."

Rattlety-bang over the streets ; pell-mell into the midst of wagon wheels ; whiz round the corners ! Just think of it ! And nobody to guide him but that baby ! Was she afraid ? O, no ; she kept jerking the reins, and calling, " Dap ! Dap ! " She was having her own way, and liked it ; and Whiz was having his way, and liked it too. You must know he didn't mind Flaxie any more than if she had been a fly, — nor half so much !

Mamma was the first to discover what had happened. She and Dr. Papa and Aunt Jane were in the front entry, talking about the new wall-paper.

" Why, where's the horse ? " cried Mrs. Gray, opening the door.

" Where's the baby ? " cried Dora, at the same moment. She had searched the barn and back-yard and front-yard, and could not find her.

Then you may know there was a "time." Dora wrung her hands and screamed: "The horse has run off with that baby! O, catch that precious, precious baby!"

But mamma knew that screaming would never bring her back. "O Doctor, what shall we do?" said she. And he answered, looking very pale: "If I only knew which way to go!"

"Get another horse and go *somewhere!*" said Aunt Jane.

"There isn't a horse in town that can overtake Whiz," said Dr. Gray; but he ran to the livery-stable as fast as he could go, and Preston followed at his heels.

Mamma and Aunt Jane could not keep still. Mamma went up street and Aunt Jane went down. *Somewhere* they supposed there was a broken carriage; *some-*

where there was a crushed and bleeding baby. Where, O where?

But no; that dear, good, high-minded Whiz had turned round long ago, and was going home. He knew better than to hurt one silky hair of Flaxie Frizzle's head.

Mrs. Gray had hardly got as far as the post-office, when he dashed by her; and Flaxie dropped the reins, calling out, "O, mamma, mamma!" By the time Mrs. Gray had rushed home, Whiz was in the carriage-yard as quiet as a lamb.

Dora ran for Aunt Jane, the stable-boy ran for papa, and one of the neighbors fired a gun.

But mamma took Flaxie in her arms, and as soon as she could speak for crying, asked the sweet little naughty, try-patience darling "what made her run away?"

“O I yided away, just for fun,” replied baby with a sweet smile, for she had forgotten all about the snipping.

“But Dr. Papa doesn’t allow you to climb into the carriage. It was naughty, naughty!”

“Well, I had to,” said Flaxie coolly, and thought that settled it. “*Be*-cause I was playin’ I was your naughty little goorl, mamma, and *that’s* because.”

CHAPTER IV.

BABY-MICE.

NEXT day Flaxie stood by her mother's side, resting her cheek on one little fat hand and drawing pictures with the other, wetting the pencil now and then with her moist red lips.

"Mother was so sorry she had to snip those dear wee fingers yesterday," said Mrs. Gray, "so sorry."

"Well, you was naughty, wasn't you, mamma?"

"I naughty? your mamma naughty?"

"Yes, 'cause you snipped my fing-ers; and *that's* because."

"O, but I snipped them to make you a better girl; I wanted you to remember not to strike your cousin Midge, you know."

"Well, but mamma, *you* was naughty to strike *me*!"

"No, O no."

"Well, you was a *little* naughty," said baby in a forgiving tone.

It was of no use talking; Flaxie Frizzle could *not* understand. She had struck Midge, and mamma had struck Flaxie; if one of them was naughty, so was the other.

Mrs. Gray smiled and looked puzzled. What should she do with this child who had such queer ideas about everything?

But while she was still thinking, Mrs. Prim came in, and Flaxie very soon slipped out of the room.

"Well, I'm glad the horse brought her home alive," said Mrs. Prim, taking out

her little ebony work-box, for she had come to stay to dinner. "She is a very singular child, and has always had her own way. Didn't I tell you you would find it hard to manage her?"

"Yes," replied Mrs. Gray, "but I am trying first of all to make her love me. I wish I had not been obliged to snip her fingers yesterday, for it did no good, and I really believe she thinks I snipped them on purpose to make her cry."

"O well, if you keep on punishing her whenever she is naughty, she will soon know what it means. I think if I were in your place I would have a thin piece of whalebone in my work-basket and use it pretty often, Mrs. Gray. It will make the flesh tingle, but it won't hurt her much."

Mrs. Prim had no children of her own, but she knew just how children ought to

be managed. Mrs. Gray made no reply, but she listened with great respect, for Mrs. Prim's opinion was worth more than most people's. She was President of the Ladies' Sewing Society, and sometimes lectured in the vestry. She could lecture almost as well as Mr. Lane, the minister.

Now when Flaxie Frizzle went out of the room, she ran down stairs to find Julia whom she called "Ninny," but Ninny had not yet returned from school. Some masons had come to pull down the kitchen chimney, which is not quite so bad as pulling down a house. The white dust was flying like snow, and the bricks fell with a clatter.

"This is no place for little girls," said Dora, who had an old apron tied around her head, and looked rather nervous. "Why don't you stay up stairs with your mamma?"

But Flaxie Frizzle gloried in the noise, and did not mind having her hair and face powdered dirty-white. The men begged her to keep out of the way, or she might be killed; but she did not think it would hurt her much to be killed, and would not go.

The men pulled away at the bricks; till by and by they pulled down the cupboard where Dora kept boxes and bottles, only the boxes and bottles had been taken away. Then Flaxie Frizzle screamed. Had a brick hit her? No, it was a cry of glee. Such a funny thing as came out of that cupboard! It was a nest of little gray mice tucked into the warm wall. Down fell the nest like a cobweb, and out rolled the mice.

“ Three blind mice, three blind mice,
And they all ran up to the farmer’s wife,”

sang Mr. Johnson.

But here were six, and there was nobody's wife to run to. Poor little things! They hadn't the least idea what to do.

Flaxie had never seen a mouse before.

"O, there's anudder and anudder and anudder," shouted she, as the little creatures tried to run on their thread-like feet. "They's got some foots! *See um go!*"

They did not understand her, but her sweet little voice frightened them as if it had been the roar of a lion.

"There, you'd better go and tell your mother about it," said Dora. "Tell her,

"Little mousey run away,
What you think your mamma say,
Tu de linkey tidy."

"O mamma," cried Flaxie, almost flying up stairs, "I've seen sumpin."

"You have, darling!"

"Yes *um*, 'twas a *mouse!* Two, free, five

hunderd mouses! Got little feddoes on 'em (she meant *feathers*.) Got some foots! D'ever *you* see a mouses, mamma?"

Flaxie was catching her breath, and her eyes were bright with delight. She was so sure her mamma never *had* seen a "mouses," and she was telling news for once in her life. But Mrs. Prim spoiled it all by saying quickly,

"Yes indeed, little Mary, we've seen them a great many times."

Miss Frizzle was crushed, and the brightness died out of her eyes. Her mother saw it, and said kindly,

"We've seen mouses, darling, but perhaps we never saw any *just* like yours. How do yours look?"

But Flaxie did not care about talking any more. "H'm," said she coolly, "they look *velly well*!"

And that was all she had to say. She turned and ran down stairs again; but alas, the precious mice were gone. Mr. Johnson had dropped them into a tin pail, Dora had brought the cat, and the cat had put her paw on the gray mouses, and eaten them, every one.

Flaxie Frizzle cried with all her might. She did not cry because poor Mrs. Mouse would come home by and by and find her house and family gone; she did not care a bit for Mrs. Mouse; she was crying because she wanted the baby-mice herself.

"I'll tell you what I've a great mind to do," said Mr. Johnson to Dora, "my little boy has some white mice, and I'd rather give them away than not; I guess I'll bring 'em over here this afternoon."

"O don't" said Dora, "I wish you wouldn't, Mr. Johnson."

But he did bring them, and give them

to Julia, and Flaxie Frizzle's heart was comforted. There were four of them, and they had pink eyes, and were kept in a cage. Mrs. Prim said they were "very disagreeable little creatures," and so they were; but they did not live long and that was one good thing. Julia named them Tip and Jip, and Tig and Jig; and as fast as they died they were buried in a sand-heap on the bank of the river; Preston buried them.

One day, to amuse Flaxie, who had the ear-ache, Mrs. Gray wrote a story about these mice, and made believe that Tig scribbled it himself with the lead pencil Flaxie dropped in the cage. Flaxie laughed, for she knew better than that, but she enjoyed the story very much, and called for it a great many times. If you would like to read it you will find it in the next chapter.

CHAPTER V.

A MOUSE'S TALE.

I AM a white mouse and I live in a house, — no, that's poetry. I mean we are four, and we live in a rolling cage with a little round door.

We came from India, where they keep such a hot ball up in the sky. You have a ball in this country just as yellow, but there isn't much of any fire in it; you call it the sun.

We came from the inside of India, "Central" 's the name. Such a place for trees! The palms go up, up, till they tear the sky open, and it leaks. Then the rain

comes down. All you have to do when it leaks is to creep into your hole, so your fur won't get wet.

First that ever I knew, I was under a palm-tree, eating a wee bit of cocoa-nut. It tasted nice, and I was glad I was alive. But I didn't suppose there was anybody else in the world but just me, till I looked up, and there were as many as sixteen more of us eating a custard-apple! I went up to the custard-apple and began to nibble. It was nicer than the cocoa-nut. I was so happy I couldn't keep still, so I twinkled my eyes, and said I,—

“*Quee, quee*, how d'ye do, folks?”

Ugh! how my voice did squee-eak!

“Great country this,” says I, “but there's nothing suits me so well as your long, long tails.”

Then they laughed.

“Where’ll I go to get *me* one?” said I; for I supposed they grew on bushes.

Just that minute somebody bit mine, and that was the way I knew I had it on.

(Please Miss Flaxie Frizzle, don’t swing me round like a tame cherry! ’Tisn’t a stem you’ve got hold of! That’s my long, long tail!)

Next thing I knew, I was in a ship. A man made it on purpose to sail me to America. He needn’t have troubled himself.

When we got here, a man by the name of Mr. Johnson put us in his cage, — us four, — he thought I’d feel bad to be alone. And one day he brought us to your house, and said he, —

“Isn’t this better than the baby-mice that fell out of the chimney? Well, I’ll

give this cage to Flaxie Frizzle's sister Julia."

Didn't you dance, Flaxie Frizzle?

And the next thing you did, you put sugar into my nose, and I almost sneezed. Then your mamma set the cage in the green-house, on a shelf. She thought I'd like the flowers.

Well, I do like them *pretty* well; and the canary-bird has a decent voice. But deary me, those hard things growing in that green tub, you don't call 'em oranges, do you? You ought to see the oranges we have in *my* country, gold cups full of honey! This is no kind of a place!

Your mother gave us some white paper bed-quilts; and *now* see! Tip and the rest of the family have chewed 'em all up. Such work!

I heard what Mrs. Prim said when Mr. Johnson brought us here.

“Disagreeable little things!” said she, “white or gray, I hate a mouse!”

She is a naughty lady, *I* think, Flaxie Frizzle! To speak of *me* and a gray mouse in the same day! *Me*, that have red eyes like stones in a breast-pin! Give me a homely *gray* mouse and I’ll eat him very quick. But this is a bad country. *Quee, quee*, so it is!

Stop a minute, Miss, there’s my brother Jig going round the wheel. Let me take a turn and then I’ll come back and tell you some more.

Why, down goes Jig. What’s the matter? He is apt to have dizzy spells; so is Tip. But he never kept still so long as this; no, never.

Please, Miss, as near as I can make out,

he is *dead*, Jig is. I don't care, do you?
Brothers are such a plague, always sticking their noses into your dinner.

"*Quee, quee,*" says Tip. "I want some bread and milk. I should think that Ninny-Gray-girl might bring it to me!"

Hush, Tip, you go along and die; who wants to hear *you* talk?

There, didn't I dance a whirlagig that time? Don't you wish you were a mouse, Flaxie Frizzle? I do, when—when—I don't see a cat. There she comes, with yellow spots!

You've let me out, you careless Frizzle, out, out; and the cage has rolled down the steps.

O Flaxie, Flaxie! up stairs you've gone, and here I am, and there's the cat! Help, somebody! Tisn't Tip, it's *Tig*! It's *me*! It's ME-e-e!

O, here comes that Ninny-Gray-girl.

“Poor mousey’s all of a tremble,” says she, and puts me back in the cage, and now I am safe. Nice girl, pretty girl, darling girl! It’s Flaxie that’s naughty; but then she’s only a baby.

Come here to me, you dear Ninny-Gray-girl, I’m sorry I squealed so loud, Miss, just now. I would have done it, only that cat was after me; and *quee, quee*, I was afraid I shouldn’t have my long tail any more!

CHAPTER VI.

SHOWING THE KITTY.

FLAXIE FRIZZLE had a bad habit of talking at the table ; and it always seemed as if she was worse when Mrs. Prim was there.

“Mamma,” said she one day from her high chair, “your littlest one doesn’t like fish ; what makes you cook him ?”

“Hush,” whispered Mrs. Gray. “Wait till Mrs. Prim stops speaking.”

“I did wait, mamma, but she *wont* stop ; she *keeps* a speakin’ !” pouted Flaxie.

Mrs. Prim was looking through her spectacles at Mrs. Gray, and saying—

"When we go to ride this afternoon we will stop at the glass-blower's."

Flaxie pricked up her ears at that. Who was going to ride? And would they take "the littlest one" too? She meant to find out.

"Do you love me, mamma?" said she, thumping hard with her mug against her red waiter, "*do* you love me, mamma?"

"Yes, dear, when you're a good girl," replied Mrs. Gray, shaking her head.

"Well, look right in my eyes, mamma. Don't you see I *are* a good girl?—Now mayn't I go yiding?"

"Eat your dinner, Mary Gray, and don't talk," said her mother sternly. She never called her Mary Gray except when she was troublesome. Flaxie bent forward, almost scalding herself against the teapot.

"I's goin' to tell you sumpin, mamma,"

whispered she, "I won't talk no more to the table, I won't talk *no* more! *Now* mayn't I go yidin'?"

But it was of no use. Mrs. Prim was to have her own carriage and driver, and as she had not asked for Flaxie's company, Mrs. Gray would not take the child, of course; she said Flaxie must stay at home with sister Ninny.

Ninny was a dear, good, patient little girl, who bore with Miss Frizzle's naughty ways, and hardly ever complained. But this afternoon, at four o'clock, her best friend, Eva Snow, was coming, and Ninny did hope that by that time her mamma would be at home again.

Mrs. Gray and Mrs. Prim rode off in the carriage, and the colored driver rolled up his eyes at the two children as they stood in the door-way. The moment the

ladies were fairly gone, Flaxie began to frisk like a wild creature. First she ran out to the gate, and screamed to a man going by,

“What’s your name, Mr. Man? What makes you smoke? My mamma doesn’t like it.”

Flaxie was not afraid of anybody. You know I told you in the first place she wasn’t at all like you; not gentle, or timid or sweet.

“O, why *did* you do that?” said Ninny, her face covered with blushes, as she darted after her saucy sister and brought her into the house.

“Well, then, show me your new picture-book and I won’t,” replied Flaxie, coolly.

As long as she was looking at pictures she was out of mischief, and Ninny turned the leaves very patiently. But soon the

cat came into the room with the new kitty in her mouth,—eating it, Flaxie thought,—and she screamed with terror. But puss wouldn't have harmed kitty for her right—*hand*, I was going to say, but it is more correct to say *paw*; she dropped it lovingly upon the sofa, purring and looking at the two little girls as if to ask,

“Isn't it such a nice baby?”

Flaxie thought it certainly was, and she picked it up and marched round the room with it, while the old cat mewed piteously.

“Do put it down,” said Ninny, “see how you make its mother cry!”

“No, I'se goin' to carry it over the bridge and show it to my grandma; she wants to see this kitty.”

Ninny was about to say,

“No *indeed*, you musn't!”

But just in time she happened to think that speaking in that way would only make Flaxie the more determined to go. So she said very quietly.

"Pretty kitty! White all over with a yellow star in its forehead. How funny!"

"Guess I'd better wash it off," said Flaxie. And away she flew to the kitchen sink.

"What are you up to now?" said Dora, who stood there with her bonnet on. "You'll drown that poor little creature and squeeze it to death, too. Miss Ninny, why don't you have an eye to your little sister?"

Poor Ninny! As if she were not using both eyes and both ears as hard as she could! And here it was half past three, and Eva Snow was coming at four.

"O Dodo," said she, "you're not going off?"

“Only just round the corner,” replied Dora, “I’ll be right back.”

But it was a pity she had not waited a little. Mrs. Gray never liked to have her leave the house when she was gone, and Dora knew it.

As soon as Dodo was out of sight, Flaxie thought she would have her own way. It was just what Ninny had been afraid of.

“You’re my darling sister Ninny,” said she with the sweetest smile, “will you lem me carry my kitty over to grandma’s?”

“Why, no indeed! Not ’way over the bridge.”

“Yes, I mus’. It won’t hurt me a tall!”

“I didn’t say it would hurt you, but I can’t let you go; so don’t ask me again.”

Flaxie’s lip curled then, as well as her nose.

"H'm!" said she, "I haven't got so good a sister as I fought I had! Laugh to me, Ninny, and get me my pretty new hat, or I'll shut you up in the closet."

Ninny did laugh at that. The idea of a dot of a child like Flaxie shutting *her* up in the closet!

"Will you lem me go?"

"No indeed, what a funny baby!"

"I've got *fi-ive* cents, Ninny, I'll buy you any fing what you want. *Now* wont you lem me? 'Twon't hurt me *a* tall!"

Ninny shook her head, and kept shaking it, while Flaxie began to push her toward the closet door.

"Will you get my hat, Ninny? 'Cause when I die and go to hebbin, then you wont have no little sister. *Now*, will you get it?"

"No, I will not, so there!"

All this while Flaxie had been pushing, and Ninny had been laughing and shaking her head. The closet door stood open, and, before Ninny thought much about it, she was inside.

“There you is,” cried the baby.

Ninny only laughed.

Then rising on her “tippy-toes,” Flaxie began to fumble with the key. Dancing up and down, working hard and breathing fast, it was very funny to hear her; but Ninny never thought the wee wee fingers could really do the mischief they were attempting.

At last, however, the key, after clicking back and forth for a good while, turned round in the lock; yes, fairly turned—the door was fastened!

“Let me out, out, *out!*” cried Ninny, pounding with both hands.

Flaxie was perfectly delighted. She had not known till that moment that the door was locked; and if Ninny had been quiet she would probably have kept fumbling away till she opened it. But now you may be sure she wouldn't so much as touch the key, not she! O Flaxie Frizzle was as big a rogue as she could be and be so little!

"Laugh to me, Ninny," said she, hopping up and down with the blind kitty still hugged to her bosom.

"What do *I* want to laugh for? Let me out, you naughty, naughty girl!"

"Well, you needn't laugh, but *I* shall," shouted Flaxie, gleefully. "Now I's goin' to grandma's and take my white kitty."

"No, no, you mus'nt, mus'nt! I shan't let you."

"You can't help it! I is goin' to go!" said Flaxie running after her hat.

“Flaxie! Flaxie Friz-zul!”

The clock was striking four. O, why didn't Eva Snow come, or *somebody*, if it was only the ice-man!

There was a sliding-door in the wall above the middle shelf, and Ninny climbed up and pushed it back. It opened into the parlor-closet, where the China dishes stood. If she could only crawl through the sliding-door she might get out by the way of the parlor, if she *did* break the dishes.

But, O dear, it wasn't half big enough! She could only put her head in, and part of one shoulder. What should she do? It was of no use screaming to that witch of a sister: but she did scream. She threatened to whip her and tie her, and pull her hair and ears, and burn up all her dollies.

But the trouble was, Flaxie knew she

wouldn't do anything of the kind; so she kept right on taking off her boots and putting on her rubbers, as if nobody spoke.

Then Ninny coaxed.

"If you'll only be a good girl I'll give you some candy and oranges and nuts, and O, a great big piece of wedding cake," said she, forgetting she hadn't a speck of wedding-cake in the world.

But while she was still screaming, Flaxie was already out of sight and hearing. She hadn't found her hat; but with her new rubbers on her feet, and the blind kitty close to her heart, she was running away to grandma's with all her might; for what if somebody should catch her before she got there?

"The faster I hurry the quicker I can't go," said she, puffing for breath.

It was a beautiful day. The wind blew

over the grass, and the grass moved in green waves. Flaxie thought it was running away as well as herself. It was half a mile to the bridge. By the time she reached Mr. Pratt's store, which was half way, she thought she would stop a minute and rest.

Mr. Jones, a lame man, was sitting next the door, and she walked straight up to him, saying,—

“Mr. *Lame* Jones, does you want to see my kitty?”

Mr. Jones smiled and took it in his hand; and then all the men looked at it and laughed, and one of them began to lift it by the tail. Flaxie screamed out,—

“You musn't hold it by the handle.”

The men laughed more than ever, and began to clap their hands, and Mr. Jones said, —

“ *You’re a cunning baby!* ”

“ Well, what makes you have *turnabout* feet ? ” replied Flaxie, quickly.

It was not a proper thing to say, and it made Mr. Jones look sober, for he was very sorry to have such feet. Mr. Pratt, fearing she would talk more about them, frowned at her and said, —

“ Good little girls don’t run away bare-headed, Miss Frizzle ; where’s you’re mamma ? ”

“ Guess I’ll go now,” said Flaxie, whirling about in a moment. “ Some more folks will want to see my kitty.”

Mr. Pratt’s boy ran after her with a stick of candy, but could not catch her. Fat as she was, she could run faster than he could.

She called at all the houses on the way, ringing the bells so furiously that people

rushed to the doors, fearing something dreadful had happened.

"I fought you'd want to see my kitty," said the runaway, holding up the little blind bundle; and of course they laughed then; who could help it? But somehow nobody thought of sending her home.

When she reached the bridge, she was hungry, and told Mr. Porter, who lived near, that she was "fond of cookies."

His wife gave her a caraway cake, shaped like a leaf.

"I'm fond of *that* one," said the little mischief, with her mouth full, "wont you give me *two* ones?"

Just think of it! Begging food at people's houses! Yet her mamma really *had* tried to teach her good manners, little as you may believe it.

"Queer she hasn't had any supper, and

so late as this," said Mrs. Porter, as Flaxie trudged off. "Why, who knows but she's running away? I saw the doctor's wife riding out with Mrs. Prim. I wonder who was left to take charge of the house? Run, Dickey, and bring back that baby."

But Dickey was just turning toward the barn-yard to feed his pig, and by the time he had fed it he forgot all about Flaxie. She met half a dozen people in crossing the bridge, but they only laughed at her kitty, and passed on.

Soon the sun set, and the new moon shone white against the blue sky. Flaxie had often seen the moon, but never so small, so very small as this.

"O I know why it's so little," said she, after looking at it in deep thought for awhile, "God has doubled it up, and *that's* because."

By this time she had changed her mind, and did not wish to go to her grandmother's.

"Mr. Pyatt fought I was *bare-head*," said she, "and grandma'll fink I'se bare-head. Guess I wont go till I get my hat on. Guess I'll go to preach-man's house, kitty. Preach-man'll want to see you."

On she went till she came to the church. Then she sat down on the big steps, dreadfully tired, moaning, —

"O, my yubbers ache so!"

Rest was very pleasant, and she half-shut her eyes, saying to kitty in a soothing tone, "Now go s'leep, kitty, and when you wants to wake up, call me, and I'll wake you!"

This was the last Flaxie remembered. When the post-man found her she was sitting up fast asleep, with her little tow-

head against the door, and the kitty in her arms. The kitty was still alive.

The post-man and the "preach-man" marched her home between them, only part of the way the "preach-man" carried her in his arms, and then the post-man looked on and smiled, for it made him think of a picture of the Good Shepherd bearing a stray lamb.

Eva Snow had let Ninny out of the closet long ago, and lots of people had been hunting for Flaxie Frizzle. When she was led into the house, casting down her eyes and putting her fingers in her mouth, her mother was so very glad that she laughed and cried. But for all that she thought Flaxie Frizzle ought to be punished, and Dr. Papa thought so too.

"*Why, mamma!*" exclaimed the child next morning, very much surprised to find

herself tied by the clothes-line to a knob in the bay-window. "*O mamma!*" said she half an hour afterward, eating a big piece of bread and butter, and wetting it with her tears as she hopped back and forth, "I didn't *spect* you'd tie me! Mr. Lame Jones said I was *very* cunning!"

Her mother smiled a little, but she did not untie her till afternoon, and then Flaxie Frizzle promised she would never take her kitty visiting again, as long as she lived.

"Well, Mrs. Gray," said Mrs. Prim, laughing and looking at the little girl through her spectacles, "I suppose you believe that, but *I* don't."

"Yes, I do believe it," replied Mrs. Gray, stooping to kiss away a wrinkle which came into Flaxie's forehead. "She hasn't told me any wrong stories yet, and I'll trust her till she does."

CHAPTER VII.

FLAXIE'S KNIT-NEEDLE.

NOW a great many children do tell wrong stories, and don't know any better; they make them up just for fun, and because they like to see people look surprised. But Mrs. Gray had had the care of Flaxie Frizzle three months, and had never heard her tell any of these queer little fibs.

One day Mrs. Gray sat knitting a small red and white striped stocking, when Flaxie came up to her with a slate and pencil, saying, —

“ Won't you *dror* me a little girl, mamma ? ”

Mrs. Gray dropped her work and took up the pencil.

"Now dror the little girl's mamma," said Flaxie, looking on, well pleased. "O you didn't make her mamma yockin' her! Now a *napple*. Did her mamma peel it?"

"There, Flaxie, I've drawn you a plate of cherries, an apple, and an orange. Anything more?"

"Yes, a *catto-pillo*."

"Well, I'll draw a caterpillar crawling up one side of a tree, and a spider crawling up the other. There, look."

"Did God make spiders?"

"Yes."

"*Why* did He? Which does he love bestest, — ugly spiders or sweet little cunnin' *catto-pilloes*?"

"I don't know. He loves them both."

"Why?"

"O, because they are both good."

"Spiders isn't good, mamma, they bite."

"There, Flaxie, now I've drawn you a house and a sky with the sun shining, and I can't stop to draw any more."

"Does the sun have *whisters*, mamma?"

Mrs. Gray had made some rays which did look like whiskers. She laughed, and rubbed out the sun, for fear of more remarks. But Flaxie's next question was about something quite different.

"May I have your knit-needle, mamma?"

"Why, no; I need four to work with."

"You've got some *more* in the closet, mamma; I saw some. I *have* to have a knit-needle."

"But you might stick it in your eyes, child, if I gave you one. I'm afraid of you, Flaxie."

“ ‘Fraid o’ *me*, mamma! Why, look at me and see how little I are.”

Mrs. Gray did look, and after that she could not help smiling and hugging Flaxie, and giving her a crooked needle out of a drawer in the closet.

Now observe what followed; for this is a true story.

Flaxie was delighted to get the needle; all the more so because she saw her mother did not wish her to have it. First she bent it up at one end, and marched off to the little brook behind the house, where Preston went for trout. But the fish would not bite. Then she began to “hoe” with it in the front door-yard.

“Digging her way through to China, I suppose,” thought Mrs. Gray, looking out of the window at the chubby little figure, and smiling.

Flaxie was busy all the morning, and came into the house at dinner-time very dirty and hungry. Just after dinner Mrs. Prim called with her pony-carriage, and asked her to ride. "I am going to take some jelly and broth to one of the sick prisoners at the jail," said she, "and Flaxie can go with me as well as not."

Mrs. Prim was always saying Flaxie ought to behave better, but she was very fond of the child for all that.

"Put your gloves on, darling," said Mrs. Gray. "And O, where's that knitting-needle? Don't take it away in your pocket."

"No, mamma," said Flaxie, dancing out to the carriage, "I won't."

When they came back, she had wonders to relate.

"Me and Miss Prim went to the jail-

house, mamma; d' ever *you* go to the jail-house? We saw mens in there. One of the mens sung 'Jesus loves me'. One of the mens made shoes. Miss *Lame* Jones comed there; she bringed a *bastet*. Wish *you'd* go to jail-house, mamma."

"O, but you took your needle with you, after all, Flaxie," said Mrs. Gray. For the child held the crooked thing clutched in her hand. "You carried it in your pocket, just as I told you not to do."

"No, I never, mamma. This needle isn't *that* one."

"Why, yes, Flaxie, it certainly is. I remember just how it looked, and how you bent it up at one end for a fish-hook."

"No, mamma, this needle *isn't* that one. I losted that one 'fore I went to jail-house."

"Why, darling, how *can* you talk so?" said her mamma, quite shocked.

"I didn't know I was taking such a naughty girl in my carriage," said Mrs. Prim, looking straight through her spectacles at Flaxie.

"I didn't carry off no needle in my pottet," persisted the little one. "I never."

"O, Flaxie!"

"I didn't, mamma."

"My precious child, how can you tell me such a wrong, wrong story?"

"Is this the little Pinky Pearly I used to know?" exclaimed Mrs. Prim, sorrowfully.

"O mamma, O Miss P'im, I never! I didn't carry off no knit-needle in my pottet. I losted my knit-needle. Yes, I did! I s'pose you *know* I losted it."

"Then where did you get this one?"

"The lady gived it to me."

"What lady?" asked Mrs. Prim, sternly.

"Lady down to jail-house, — I *guess*," faltered poor Flaxie, beginning to be frightened. If there *was* anything she felt afraid of, it was Mrs. Prim's spectacles.

"What was the lady's name?" said Mrs. Prim.

"I don't know. Mrs. *Lame* Jones, I s'pose."

"As if Mrs. Jones carried knitting-needles round the streets, you naughty child!" exclaimed Mrs. Prim. "But I am going away now, and when I come again, I hope you will be sorry for this, and tell your mamma and me the whole truth. We can't love little girls that tell lies."

"Darling, come sit in my lap," said Mrs. Gray, as soon as Mrs. Prim had gone. "Now don't be afraid, but let mamma hear just how it ail happened. God knows if you've told a wrong story, my daughter, the good God knows."

Flaxie wanted to change the subject. "What's God's *other* name, mamma?"

"Hush, Flaxie, I am talking about this wrong story; God heard that, for he hears everything."

"Can he hear me sniff?" said Flaxie, drawing in her breath very gently indeed, "when I sniff just as *easy*?"

"Yes, He hears everything and sees everything, and is sorry to have my darling do wrong."

"Well, I didn't. Lady down to jail-house gived me knit-needle," said Flaxie, staring hard at the carpet. "I didn't

have nuffin in my pottet but my hank-fist and some more fings. Lady gived it to me: guess *wasn't* Miss Lame Jones."

Mrs. Gray talked and pleaded with the little creature for a whole hour, but it did no good. Flaxie was always very set in her way, and she still persisted that "a lady gived her the needle." Sometimes she thought it was "Miss Lame Jones," and sometimes she was quite sure it was "anudder lady."

"What shall I do?" asked Mrs. Gray, much distressed, when "Dr. Papa" came home at night. "I have said everything I can think of, but the child is as firm as a rock."

"Poor little thing, I'm sorry," said Dr. Gray. "But Emily," added he, after thinking a moment, "do you know it's barely possible that baby is telling the truth?"

"The truth? O no," replied Mrs. Gray, shaking her head with a sad smile. "It isn't very likely anybody would give her a knitting needle. And besides, I'm sure this is the one I took out of my box. See, it is just the size of the others.— But where are you going?"

"Well, I thought I'd go down to the jail," replied the doctor, "I won't be gone long."

When he returned his face was all "smiled up."

"Where's my little Pinky Pearly?" said he. "She did tell the truth, bless her heart! Mrs. Jenkins, the jailor's wife, did give her that needle!"

"Is it possible?" said Mrs. Gray, very much surprised. "O, I'm so glad!"

"Yes, Mrs. Jenkins says the child told her such a pitiful story about losing a

knitting-needle, that she hunted up another. Queer it should happen to look just like yours, wasn't it?"

Mrs. Gray ran up stairs to get Flaxie, and the little girl never had such a kissing before in her life.

"I was good, wasn't I, mamma?" said she drying her eyes. "God looked in my pottet all the time, and He *saw* I was good. Now won't you tell Miss P'im?"

"Yes," replied Dr. Papa, "your sister Ninny shall go this very minute and tell Mrs. Prim we haven't any little girls at this house that tell wrong stories.

CHAPTER VIII.

FLAXIE'S PEDLER.

OF course Julia was glad to go. She was always glad to do anything for Flaxie. Such patience as she showed toward that troublesome, rattle-brained child was very uncommon, so Mrs. Prim always declared.

"But then I don't know that Julia is any more patient with Flaxie than Preston is," said Mrs. Prim; "and Preston is only a boy. I hope Flaxie will be a comfort to her brother and sister when she grows up, to pay for the trouble she gives them now."

When Julia told Mrs. Prim about the knitting-needle, she said, —

"I'm so glad your father went down to the jail to inquire. I wish I had thought of that myself. We can't be too careful about doing justice to such little children."

So you see Mrs. Prim was a very good woman, if she did scold a little, and look very sharply through her spectacles.

One morning Julia and Eva Snow were at play in the front yard when Flaxie Frizzle came along crying, and said the cow had stepped on her toe." Julia laughed for she knew it was not true; but Flaxie thought it was true.

"I want you to *fix* it," said Flaxie.

"What shall I do?"

"Put on some *caffer*."

Julia went into the house and brought out the camphor bottle. Then she took off Flaxie's shoe and stocking and found a small button had got inside the stocking and pressed against one of Flaxie's toes;

that was all. But she bathed the little fat foot all over with camphor, till the child stopped crying, and said, —

“ I *finks* it feels better.”

“ Hush,” said Julia, “ there’s a man coming. He mustn’t see you with your stocking off. Let’s put it on quick.”

“ It looks like a beggar-man,” whispered Eva Snow ; “ let’s go and hide.”

“ *Bedder-man!*” said Flaxie in her loudest tones. “ What’s his name?”

“ Do hush,” whispered Eva. “ Beggars are awful creatures. I heard of one once that bit a little girl.”

And Eva, who was very timid, ran round into the back-yard. Julia ran after her, saying, —

“ It’s only a pedler, Eva. He’s got a basket, and I can see the vases and bottles sticking up in it. Hark, he’s ringing the front-door bell.”

Mrs. Gray overheard Julia from the pantry window, where she stood making snow-cream for dinner.

"Children," said she, putting her head out of the window, "you may go round to the front door, and tell the man we do not wish to buy any of his goods to-day."

Julia and Eva went, followed, of course, by Flaxie Frizzle, with her shoe dangling. She wanted to see how the "*bedder man*" looked.

He was not very handsome, certainly. His face was marked with small-pox, and he was cross-eyed; but he smiled very sweetly upon the three little girls, and did not seem to have any idea of going away, though Julia told him very plainly that her mother did not wish to buy anything.

"Well, you are good little children," said he, "and you shall see something rail nice."

So, with a few words more about their bright eyes and red cheeks, he set his basket on the door-stone, and began to take out the things from it, one by one, and hold them up to be admired.

When it came to that the girls ought to have gone away; but then the vases, and bottles, and images did look *so* pretty! And there was Flaxie gazing quite bewitched. You must know it was the hardest work in the world to move Flaxie when she didn't wish to be moved.

"Here's some dreadful pooty vases," said the pedler, holding up a pair of blue ones with a spray of gilt flowers traced over them.

The children's eyes shone; they thought they had never seen anything quite so beautiful, so "sparkling and bright."

"Do you want 'em, little ladies? Give

me an old rag of a dress, and you shall have 'em!"

Why, was that possible? Both the little ladies were speechless from surprise.

"Yes, just for an old rag of a dress ye may have 'em! The little gyurl in the next house wanted 'em, but her ma said she wasn't good enough to have such pooty vases."

"He must meant Caddy Lang," said Julia to Eva.

"Yes," spoke up the peddler, "her name was Caddy, and she wanted the vases so bad that I give her a teetle doll-baby, jus' like this here one, to kape her from crying."

"He must be a good man," thought Julia and Eva, "a great deal better than he looks, or he wouldn't give a doll to a little girl he never saw before. And O,

would he let us have those vases for an old dress ? ”

The peddler saw by their faces just what they were thinking.

“ Bring along some old clo’es,” said he sweetly. “ A ragged silk gown, now, a velvet bunnit, a handful of blue ribbin or a gold finger-ring. *Anything* you want to throw away ! ”

As if they were anxious to throw away velvet bonnets and gold rings ! Julia did not stir.

“ And *any* old rags, Miss. Fetch ’em along, and I’ll give you something rail pooty.”

“ Rags ? ” exclaimed Julia, with a sudden dancing of hands and feet. “ *Rags* did you say ? ”

“ He isn’t a bad bedder-man, is him ? ” said Flaxie Frizzle, growing eager too.

"Man," added she looking him boldly in the eye, "Eva says you *bite* little girls."

"I *kiss* 'em," said she peddler, laughing, "that's the way *I* bite."

At these singular words, the girls ran into the back-yard, half frightened out of their senses. But by the time they reached the pantry-window Julia had forgotten her fright, and remembered only the vases.

"Oh, mother," cried she. "Those old dresses that we wear when we go into the woods. Those old things—I guess they are—I don't know *where* they are.—And there's an old rag-bag in the back room, you know, and " —

"O, hasn't that peddler gone yet?" said Mrs. Gray, laughing. "Run back, dear, and tell him to go right away."

"O, mamma, I don't dare to! And I

do want a vase or one of those little boys praying. Every thing is so pretty," said Julia, walking slowly back with tears in her eyes.

"A handsome *skee-urt*," cried the peddler, not waiting for Julia to speak. "Ask your ma for a *skee-urt*, some folks call them *pay-the-coats*. Or a velvet bunnit or a gold finger-ring. *Anything* she wants to throw away!"

"If you pees, I want mug," said little Flaxie, whose mischievous hands Julia had had hard work all this time to keep out of the basket.

"Oh, don't," said Julia, gently pushing the child away, "I'm afraid something will get broken."

"No, sumpin *wont*," said Flaxie, drawing out a cologne-bottle with gilt bands, and holding it wrong-side upwards to her nose.

“Don’t you be afeared, little lady,” said the good-natured peddler, to Julia. “She’s too swate a baby to break things.”

“But my mamma wishes you to go away, sir.”

“Look here, Mees,” said the peddler, without noticing Julia’s words. “Did your bright eyes iver see the like o’ this?”

So saying he set upon the door sill a decanter and six little wine-glasses, as beautiful and delicate as red bubbles.

“Oh, how sweet,” cried Julia, “they look as if they were made of fog, or pink clouds. Eva, won’t you *please* go ask mamma again? I must stay here and see to Flaxie. Now, Flaxie, don’t you *breathe*.”

But Flaxie was fond of acting contrary to orders, and not only went on breathing but made a sudden plunge forward, and

seized the delicate decanter with both hands.

“Give it to me this minute,” cried Julia, highly excited, “Oh, if I hadn’t told you not to, you wouldn’t have thought of touching it!”

Flaxie trudged into the parlor and crept under the sofa, holding the decanter close to her breast. Before Julia could prevail upon her to come out, Eva had returned with the latest message from Mrs. Gray.

“She says she hasn’t any old dresses to sell, and she wishes the man would please go away; she never trades with people at the door.”

The man was not well pleased with these remarks, of course, and his shaggy eyebrows met over his cross eyes in a frown.

Just at that moment Flaxie hugged the

decanter to death, or into fifty pieces, Julia's heart sank like lead. She had only voice enough to cry, "O, Flaxie, Flaxie!"

"What craythers ye are!" exclaimed the pedler, in fierce wrath. "Sich a pack o' childers did niver I see!"

"O, dear, dear, dear," begged Julia, "she's only a baby; she didn't mean to."

"Don't ye talk to me Mees! ye jist stood there afore my face, and let that young one meddle! Now, Mees, ye've spiled the set, and it's the whole ye must pay fur; and the cost is eight dollars."

"Eight dollars," groaned Julia. If he had said eight hundred it would not have frightened her any more. She turned very pale, but was too much excited to cry. Eva, too, was in a flutter; but then Eva had felt no care of Flaxie; so her conscience was easy, and she lost no time in running

back to Mrs. Gray with the dreadful news.

Mrs. Gray came in directly with a look of dismay, for her husband was gone, and she was rather afraid of such an angry, scolding man.

"Ye see, ma'am" said he, "the set is spiled, and your baby spiled it."

Yes, that was true, but Mrs. Gray did not believe the set had ever been worth eight dollars, or even three.

"I am sorry about it," said she pleasantly, for it was of no use reasoning with an angry Irishman, "I am very sorry, and will see what I can do for you."

She went up stairs and brought down a new calico dress, just made; but the peddler said it was an insult, the dress wasn't worth two dollars, and the glass set was worth eight.

"O, mamma," said Julia, wringing her hands, "you may open my money-box, and take all I've been saving for Christmas. Pour it out, but — but — don't let me see it!"

"Why, darling, it was Flaxie, who broke the decanter, naughty Flaxie. Why should you pay for it?"

"O, mamma, she's my *sister*! She squeezed it to pieces, you know, but 'twas *I* was to blame. I ought to have taken care of her."

"Well, I dare say you tried to take care of her, you dear child."

"Yes'm, I did; but I ought not to have said she mustn't touch the bottle, If I hadn't said that, she never'd have thought of touching it — perhaps."

And there stood Flaxie, with her finger in her mouth, staring about in the most

innocent way. The more mischief she did the more innocent she looked, as a general thing.

Mrs. Gray kissed Julia's broad, white forehead.

"Here is one little girl with a conscience," thought she, "and a very tender conscience too."

"And we oughtn't to have let the man in," added Julia. "So you had *better* take my money."

The last words were half drowned in a sob.

"You darling child," said mamma, "'twill be a long while before I take your precious bits of silver; so set your dear little heart at rest."

The Irishman heard all this, and ought to have felt ashamed of himself; but he went on muttering; I suppose he was trying to keep his anger warm.

Little Flaxie, at the bottom of her heart, enjoyed all this parade.

"You gate big man," said she, with a fearless glance at the pedler, "you wasn't polite to my mamma. You didn't ask please!"

The man softened a little at this, and said "he didn't mane to be rude to the ladies, but he must have his money."

Mrs. Gray knew it was very unjust, but was about going up stairs for her purse to give him the eight dollars, when I am happy to say Dr. Gray entered the room.

He knew at once what ought to be done with such a villain, and walked straight up to him saying,—

"What do you mean, by behaving so to a lady, and frightening little children?"

Here Julia clung to her father and

bathed his coat sleeve with her tears. They two were the best friends in the world.

“Now, sir, do you take that dress that the lady is good enough to offer you. It is worth more than your flimsy decanter. Do you take it and march out of this house with it.”

The peddler muttered something about his “hard airnings;” but the impudence was gone out of him; he quailed, and tried to hide his face under his hat.

“Here, take your wine-glasses with you,” called out Dr. Gray, as the man was meekly walking off without them. “And if you know what’s best for yourself, sir, you’ll treat ladies with civility while you stay in this town.”

Dr. Gray was a large, noble-looking man, and when he spoke with such coolness

and firmness, the stranger never thought of answering him back.

"O, papa," said Julia, as the peddler hurried off with the wine-glasses, "I'm so glad you came. How good you always are!"

"I fink Dr. Papa's real nice," said Miss Frizzle, taking a peep at him through a bit of the broken red glass, "but that *bedder*-man was velly bad. I wouldn't kiss him for nuffin!"

CHAPTER IX.

"TUSKING CORN."

BUT the next man who called at the house Flaxie did kiss with a good will, and that was Grandpa Pressy. He had come thirty miles to do a little business and make a visit at Dr. Gray's.

"Where's my little Curly-Pate?" said he, the first thing; and then there was such a dancing and laughing that Dora heard it in the kitchen, and wondered which grandpa had come.

For Flaxie had five grandpas: did you ever hear of such a thing? She had *always* had Grandpa Gray, Grandpa Law-

rence, and Great-grandpa Pressy; and after the new mother came, she had two more—Grandpa Lolly and Grandpa Hale. But best of all the five, she loved Great-grandpa Pressy.

Dear old man, he hadn't a tooth in his head, his hair was white, and he went stumping about with a silver-headed cane; but for all that, he could carry little folks on his back as well as ever he could in his life.

I am afraid Flaxie *was* rather rough in her ways, or he wouldn't have called her "his little boy." But he said that was because she looked like his Johnny, who died fifty years ago. At any rate he loved her better than all the rest of his great-grandchildren put together, if she did stick hollyhocks and things in his hair.

As I have said, his hair was white. It

was very long, too, and he let Flaxie use it for reins and drive him about while he carried her pickaback.

But I must tell you something that happened while grandpa was there, though to be sure grandpa had nothing to do with it, and was greatly distressed when he heard his little pet had been in such trouble.

In the first place, I suppose you can see by this time that Flaxie Frizzle was pretty "set in her way." Her new mamma had been told that the child had a dreadful temper, but she would not believe it, for she had had no real trouble with her as yet.

Still, it was true. Flaxie Frizzle did have a baby-will of her own, which wouldn't bend any more than a steel poker. And only think how everybody had petted the child!

Why, she had a dim idea that she was queen of the whole world, and of her new mamma in particular. The day she broke the pedler's decanter, nobody scolded her. She remembered that, I assure you. Yes, this new mamma had been very, very kind, and only tied her just once with a rope; but Flaxie didn't think that was much of a punishment, for at the very time she was tied, she had been allowed to eat a big piece of honey on her bread and butter. Really, this new mamma *was* a nice lady, and Flaxie approved of her, only she mustn't ask Flaxie to obey, unless Flaxie was perfectly willing.

You see if this little girl had been allowed to go on in her own way, she would soon have driven her poor mother wherever she pleased, just as she drove Grandpa Pressy by the hair.

"It never will do," thought Mrs. Gray. "I love her with all my heart, but I shall spoil her if I do not teach her to obey."

Well, one day while Grandpa Pressy was there, he husked a bushel of corn for his horse. Flaxie liked to see him do it: it was very funny to watch the yellow ear coming out of its wrappings, like a very little baby out of a blanket. And when grandpa had fed his horse and gone to the city, Flaxie was not half satisfied, but kept running out to the stable, and bringing in to her mother one ear at a time, saying,—

"*Tusk* it, mamma; please to."

Mrs. Gray obeyed her daughter for a while, though to do it she was obliged each time to drop her sewing, and after that to pick up the corn-silk from the

carpet. At last she decided that she could not husk any more corn if she meant to finish her little girl's dress that day.

"Stop, Flaxie Frizzle," said she, very pleasantly. "Stop bringing corn to mamma. Go, darling, and carry it back to the stable."

Flaxie did not stir: she only peeped up in her mother's face to see if she were in earnest. Yes, she was quite in earnest.

"Guess I won't mind," thought Miss Frizzle, "'cause I don't want to, and *that's* because."

"Tusk it, mamma," said she, sweetly, while she swung the corn by its hair, just as she had swung a white mouse by its tail, "please to tusk it."

"Carry it away," repeated Mrs. Gray, threading her needle.

Flaxie peeped up in her mother's face again, and patted her cheek with the corn.

"Please to tusk it."

"Mind your mother, Flaxie."

"Tusk it!"

Mrs. Gray made no answer.

"Tusk it," cried Flaxie, stamping her foot.

Mrs. Gray finished a ruffle as calmly as she could, and still Flaxie stood screaming "Tusk it!" till her little face was crimson. O, to think there must be trouble with this dear child!

"Why don't you tusk it, you naughty mamma?" cried she, every moment louder and louder, though her voice was growing hoarse and her pretty white throat swelled with anger.

"I am glad Ninny is gone to school,

and Preston, too," thought Mrs. Gray, they would both feel so sorry about this."

"*Tu-usk* it, mamma! Tusk it! Tusk it!"

"Flaxie," said Mrs. Gray, slowly and sadly, "if you ask me that again, I shall have to punish you."

"Tusk it!" screamed the little one, furiously. It did not sound like Flaxie's voice at all. "*Tusk it kick!*"

Mrs. Gray dropped the little dress into her work-basket, and taking the struggling child in her arms, carried her upstairs to the bath-room, and locked her in. The room was not dark, and she knew Flaxie would not be afraid.

"I hope she will come to herself, now," sighed Mrs. Gray; and she lingered in the chamber a while, but still heard Flaxie catching her breath and shouting as

angrily as ever, "Tusk it! Tusk it!"

She unlocked the door. "Look at me," said she. Flaxie Frizzle looked. It was like flint and iron; one face was as firm as the other. It is true, Mrs. Gray was right and her baby was wrong, yet Flaxie could not see the difference. She thought she must make this naughty mother "give up." She certainly must.

"I am going downstairs, darling," said Mrs. Gray, "but here is a bell, and when you mean to be a good girl you may ring it, and I will come up and let you out."

Mrs. Gray went away, and in about two minutes the bell rang hard, and she came up again.

"Tusk it," said Flaxie, shaking the ear of corn at her.

Tears sprang to Mrs. Gray's eyes, for she saw now that this was only the beginning of trouble.

"I shall have to take away the bell," said she, "but I am going to sit in the chamber, and when you are perfectly still I will open the door again."

Flaxie wondered why her mother should cry. "Isn't you a-goin' to tusk it?" screamed she, in great surprise.

Hours passed ; but every time Mrs. Gray looked in, Flaxie swung the ear of corn and cried, "Tusk it."

Dinnertime came. Mrs. Gray talked and pleaded with her little daughter, but Flaxie was quiet only long enough to gather strength, and then she would shout forth the words, "Tusk it, tusk it!" like bullets out of a gun.

They both went without their dinner. All that golden Autumn afternoon the distressed mother labored with her little daughter. She did not like to whip her,

or even to snip her hands, lest it should make her worse; for Flaxie did not know what snippings meant.

At last, quite worn out, the little one fell asleep, and was gently carried off to bed. "Poor little Flaxie," sobbed the mother, "I wish I could take all her trouble myself." Yet Mrs. Gray had had the hardest of it by far.

Next morning Flaxie opened her heavy eyes, looked as serene as a young dove, and ran to her mother's bedside, saying, "Tusk it." Those two little words were as terrible to Mrs. Gray as a summons to battle, but her husband hid his head in the pillow and smiled; for, as he whispered to his wife, he knew the worst was over, and the poor child was only making a last trial of her power.

"Mother will dress little Flaxie, and

then Flaxie must carry the corn to the stable."

There was no answer. But the instant her frock was fastened, off ran Flaxie Frizzle with the corn, and back again for a kiss. This was her way of making peace. She knew now that her mother must rule, and not she; and from this time forth, though often and often a naughty little girl, she never showed any lasting temper, and never gave her mother such serious trouble again.

CHAPTER X.

"DING DONG BELL."

WHEN winter came Flaxie was glad to see the snow. A year ago it had looked to her like a strange new thing, and she had said, —

"See the candy pills!"

Now she knew what it was, and loved to watch it coming down so softly from the clouds.

"Preston," said she, "where does the snow stay when the ground is painted all over with pittty flowers?"

It was a question that had puzzled her little head a good deal; but Preston could

not answer it so that she would understand.

"Where does the snow stay? Well, it stays *round*, I suppose," replied he, laughing.

"I should fink," said Flaxie, looking steadily out of the window, "I should *fink*—"

"Well, what should you fink?"

"I should fink when it snows, *God* might come down! It's so *slippery* He might come down very easy!"

Preston ran away to tell his mother what Flaxie had said; for the little sister never made a bright or a queer speech, but he always reported it the next minute.

"She wishes very much to see God, and asks a great many questions about Him," said Mrs. Gray. "I only wish I knew what answers to make to the dear little girl."

The three children were about to make a visit at Grandpa Pressy's.

"Now, mamma, you must be *hurry*," said Flaxie. "Put my white dress in the travel-bag, 'cause we *have* to go in the cars to see my grandpa."

He lived in the country, in a yellow house that was a hundred and fifty years old. Flaxie thought it the funniest place. There was a great fireplace in the sitting-room, with high brass andirons and a roaring fire; and sometimes grandma sat near it in one corner, with a white cap on, while grandpa sat in the other corner, reading. There were no holes in the floor where you could warm your feet, and Flaxie asked, —

"Grandpa, where's your *furnish*?"

"We don't want any furnaces here," replied grandpa. "We like to have our fire where we can see it."

"O there's a little girl in the andiron, looks jus' like me," said Flaxie.

"And there's a big girl in the other andiron, looks just like *me*," laughed Ninny, who sat beside grandma, learning to knit. "But I shouldn't think you'd joggle the floor so when grandpa is shaving, Flaxie Frizzle."

Grandpa stood just then before the looking-glass, scraping his chin with a razor, which he dipped into a mug of hot water. He did this every morning, and always told Flaxie to keep still, for if she ran across the floor it made his arm shake a little.

"There, I kep' as still as I could, but I *couldn't*," said Flaxie, very glad to see grandpa wipe his razor and put it away in the cupboard. "Now will you lem me go out to the barn and see the fings?"

The "fings" were a mule, two oxen, two horses, five cows, twenty sheep, and forty hens.

"Well, yes, if your sister Julia will dress you up warm we'll go," replied grandpa, who liked of all things to roam about with his "little boy" perched on his shoulder.

The barn was big and square, not like Dr. Papa's nice brown stable, which was as pretty as the houses half the people live in. But Flaxie liked the queer old barn better than the stable, because it had "more fings in it."

"The biddies and the sheeps don't look any bit alike, do they, gampa? What's *that* fing?"

"That's a mule, my dear."

"Pretty mulie! The hossy is *deaf*er than the mulie, grandpa."

"Deafer? What do you mean by that?"

"'Cause the hossy hasn't got so big ears as the mulie," replied Flaxie, looking very wise.

Grandpa laughed to himself, and kept laughing, but Flaxie couldn't think why.

"Does you like moolly-cows, gampa? I like 'em. Did ever you see a great big moolly-cow with a great big nose, big as me?"

"No, I never did."

"Well, *I* sawed it. Nose was big as me. Camed way down long, and curled over—jus' so."

"Where did you see that cow?"

"To my house. In Ninny's picture-book."

"An elephant, most likely," thought grandpa, and laughed again.

"Is it *your* fings in this barn, gampa?"

"No, they belong to Uncle James; and he and his boys take care of them. I've got to be an old man, my dear, eighty years old."

"*Is* you? Well, I's free, 'most four. So won't you please jump me up on the mulie's back?"

"No, my little boy, that mulie kicks pretty hard; but you may feed the sheep if you want to."

Then he gave her some bits of beet and turnip, and let her put them in the sheep's mouths. The gentle creatures looked so sober and honest, that after the first minute, she was not at all afraid.

"Pretty sheeps," said she, "got cotton on 'em."

"O no, dear, that isn't cotton; it is

wool. God wrapped them up in it to keep them warm."

"Did He? I fink God's just as good! Now lem me go get a drink o' water."

"What a boy you are for wanting to drink," said grandpa: "Was it the dried venison you had for breakfast? That *was* pretty salt."

"Yes, I guess 'twas the *dry vengeance*," replied Flaxie.

But in truth she was not thirsty at all: she only wanted to see the old-fashioned well, which stood a few rods from the kitchen door.

Grandpa went into the house and brought out a pail.

"O! O!" said Flaxie, clapping her hands, "lem *me* pump some water. 'Twon't hurt me *a* tall."

"Are you going to tease your dear

grandpa?" said the old man, stooping to kiss Flaxie's little sweet mouth and fat dimpled cheeks. "Won't you be satisfied to see *me* get the water?"

"Yes, I'll be *faticied*, gampa."

But she did not look so, I must confess.

Now there was a platform round the well, with a low railing, and no pump at all. The snow was deep enough to cover this railing, and a sleet had fallen the night before, which made a hard crust. Flaxie danced along lightly, but grandpa kept slumping through.

"Look out, little shaver," said the old gentleman, "this is a pokerish place."

"Lem me peek in, gampa," said Flaxie, eagerly. "You s'pose what makes it look so black down there? Did God make this well?"

"No, I made it. Out of the way, little boy."

"Did you make it with a — a hoe?"

"No, I didn't."

"I fink I don't want to go down there. Do you want to, gampa?"

"No; but you will go down if you don't take care," said grandpa, turning the creaking windlass.

It was the very sound Flaxie had been longing to hear.

"I fink it's queer. Has that fink got any mouf?" said she, stepping nearer and nearer.

"Look out, child! Step back!" exclaimed grandpa, drawing up the bucket.

But he spoke too late. At that very moment Flaxie's foot slipped, and she fell into the well.

Grandpa dropped his pail of water,

gave a loud cry for help, and then, without waiting for anybody to hear the cry, plunged in after her. He *dared* not wait, for she had fallen in head-first, and would have no chance to breathe with her head under water.

Dear grandpa! He forgot he was eighty years old; he forgot his limbs were stiff, and the stones that lined the well were slippery and cold. He could slide down somehow, and he must do it, whether he ever got up again or not. No matter for that; he *must* do it, or his darling would die.

Die! She was dead already, or why didn't she cry?

"O, my dearest, my sweetest," groaned the poor old man, as he slipped slowly along down the cold stones.

"Why, gampa," replied a faint little

voice from the hollow deep, — a very surprised little voice — “what made YOU come? Did you tumble in too?”

“Alive! Alive! Thank the Lord, she’s alive!” exclaimed grandpa.

How it happened that she didn’t alight on her head I don’t know, but perhaps she caught hold of the rope in going down, and that saved her. At any rate, there she stood, just up to her chin in water, the most astonished baby you ever saw in your life. And that was the reason she hadn’t cried, — because she *was* so astonished.

By that time everybody was there, — even grandma, — and Uncle James was turning the windlass with all his might.

Good windlass, strong windlass, can you bring these two people out of the well?

Grandpa put Flaxie in the bucket first,

and she was brought up safe and sound, but screaming fearfully. Then grandpa held on by the rope, and was brought up, too, so happy that he never thought how tired he was till he fainted away.

This is all true; and for the rest of the children's visit, Flaxie did not go within six feet of that well, but ran away from it as if it were some wild creature that could follow her.

Grandpa had always loved the creaking of the old windlass, and had not been willing to have a pump; but the next day after this he said to Uncle James, —

“Get a green pump, an iron one, and have it put in to-morrow, James. I don't want my little boy tumbling into the well again, for maybe I shouldn't have strength enough next time to pull him out.”

The pump was put in, and there it

stands now. If you ever go to the State of New York, perhaps you will see it; but not the windlass, for the wooden part of that has been burned, and the iron part melted in a fiery furnace.

CHAPTER XI.

GRANDMA'S CLOCK-REEL.

AFTER this, whenever Flaxie told about falling into the well, she said, —

“I lied on my back in the water, and gampa tumbled in and picked me out.”

That was the way she told the story, and Ninny smiled in her motherly fashion, and said,—

“It isn't a fib, is it, grandpa, because she doesn't know any better?”

The children had a beautiful visit, as children almost always do when they go to “grandma's house.” And this was as lovely a grandma as ever you saw. Her

silver hair was folded smoothly under a white double-frilled cap, her eyes were forget-me-not blue, and she had a very sweet smile. But the children liked her best of all when she was telling stories.

One day she was mending an old bed-quilt, and as she rocked back and forth, sewing as she rocked, Ninny rushed in with an eager question, and Flaxie Frizzle close at her heels. "Grandma," said Ninny, "what is that thing up in the attic, that has a face and hands?"

"A face and hands? Some kind of a rag baby, I suppose."

"No, grandma, I mean two fingers. It goes whirling round and round, and then clicks like a clock."

"Goes tick, tick, tick," explained Flaxie.

"O, you mean my old clock-reel, Julia.

Your great-great-grandfather gave that to me when I was your age, ten years old. I used to spin cotton then ; I could spin like a spider."

"Why, grandma, did you spin it into spools ? "

"Like this fing ?" asked Flaxie, taking up a spool of white thread.

"O, no, my dears, only into yarn. Your great-great-grandmother carded it first into rolls, and then I *roped* it and spun it."

"On a wheel, grandma ? "

Mrs. Pressy laughed merrily.

"Little did I think in those days," said she, "that I should ever hear a grandchild asking such foolish questions ! Spin it on a wheel ? To be sure I did ! What other way is there, my dear ? "

"O, yes, grandma, I've seen a wheel

with a spindle-thing at the other end. Did you like to do it, grandma? I don't believe you got much time to play."

"Well, yes, I liked it as well as any other work, rather better, for I had a knack at spinning. And as for play, folks didn't think in those days it made so much difference whether children played or not."

"Yes, yes," added the good old lady, with a far-away look in her eyes, "children had to take the time just when they could catch it. But I *earned* the time once to go visiting, and that clock-reel"—

"O, grandma, you're beginning to tell a story! Now that's splendid! You sit right down here by me, Flaxie, and keep still! I only want to ask one question, grandma: Where were you going visiting?"

"To see Betsey Preston, a little black-eyed girl about my age."

"Did her hair curl?" asked Flaxie Frizzle.

"Not at all. It was done up with a goose-quill. Children wore their hair long in those days."

"Any feathers on it, grandma?"

"On the quill? No, indeed. It was as smooth as a toothpick."

"And where did she live?"

"Betsey? O, she lived in the town where I did, and we went to school together, and thought the world of each other."

"Well, grandma," said Julia, "it wasn't much of a visit, then, I shouldn't think, if Betsey lived right in the same town."

"Yes, but she had moved away twenty-five miles, and I hadn't seen her for six months."

"Did you love her as much as I love Eva Snow?"

"Yes, indeed," replied grandma, with sparkling eyes. "I have often said I don't believe any of my children or grandchildren ever had such feelings as I had. I used to say her name over to myself, 'Betsey Preston, Betsey Preston,' and O, how good it did sound!"

"Not so good, though, as Eva Snow, Eva Snow," repeated Julia.

"Eva Snow, Snow, Snow," struck in Flaxie.

"But Betsey had a singular temper," said grandma. "If I did anything that didn't suit her, sometimes she would say to me, 'Now, Polly, I shan't speak to you for a whole week.' I knew she would not, and it almost broke my heart."

"Why, grandma, and you so good and pleasant," said Julia.

"O, I was naughty enough, but *my*

temper was quick and soon over. I couldn't 'hold out,' and I used to cry and beg Betsey to speak to me; but all she would do was just to shake her head."

"What a naughty, hateful thing!" said Julia, and Flaxie echoed, —

"Naughty, hate-fool fmg!"

"How could you love her, grandma?" asked Julia.

"That was just what her sister Ruth used to say to me. 'How can you care any thing about her, Polly, when she treats you so?' But you see she was good when she *was* good, and somehow there was a great charm about Betsey.

"Well, that spring I grieved so much over the moving off, that mother said, 'Polly, if you'll spin a "stent" of four skeins of cotton every day for three weeks, you shall go with Paul and Judith to see Betsey Preston.' "

"O, how nice!" said Julia.

"Now, it was a hard job for a little girl like me to spin four skeins a day; but you can't think how pleased I was with the idea. I could hardly go to sleep the first night for thinking about it. My sister Judith was weaving a web of cotton and linen for us girls some gowns, and it was the cotton for those gowns that I was going to spin."

"Well, there, grandma, I didn't know you ever spun a dress!" said Julia. "How did it look?"

"It looked well enough. It was in checks, blue and yellow. But we made our gowns different from yours; they were low in the neck, with shoulder-straps, and only two or three inches long under the arm."

"Well, did you do all your stents, grandma?"

“Yes, every one, and it was very little time I had to play, but that was no matter, for I was happy enough thinking how pleased Betsey would be to see me. Every time I thought of her it was like taking the breath of a whole bed of roses.”

“What did you wear on your head, grandma?” asked Julia.

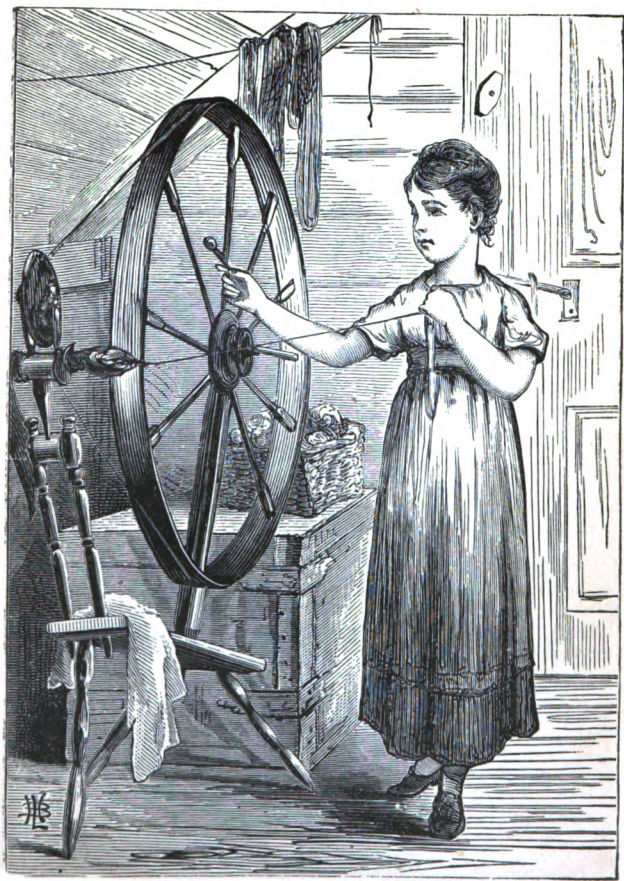
“Did you wear your cap?” said Flaxie.

“O, you want to get me started off, I see. Let me think,—I wore a blue jockey. It was a hat made of cambric over something stiff they called millinet. It looked very much like the hats you have now.”

“What kind of a thing did you ride in, grandma?”

“A chaise with two wheels.”

“And what was the first word that Betsey said when you got there?” asked Julia.



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"I don't recollect; but I know she ran out to the chaise and screamed and clapped her hands. And she looked so good to me that I would have spun five hundred skeins of cotton rather than have missed the chance of seeing her."

"That isn't all the story, is it, grandma? What kind of a time did you have with Betsey?"

"Well, we wandered about all over the farm, and were just as happy as a pair of pigeons, till all of a sudden, out in the field, I said something Betsey didn't like, and then she flung back this,—

" 'There, now, Polly, I won't speak to you again as long as you stay in my house.' "

"She didn't stop to think how hard I had worked for the chance of getting there, or she wouldn't have been so cruel.

But she had got in such a habit of plaguing me that the words came out before she thought."

"What had you done to make her angry?" asked Julia.

"I can't remember now. But there I was, ever so many miles from home, and no Betsey to speak to. My visit that I had dreamed so much about was all spoiled, and I didn't want to stay another minute."

"But you *had* to," said Flaxie.

"Yes, I had to stay till Paul was ready to go. Judith and Ruth had a nice time; they were great friends. Ruth was a beautiful girl; she never had temper-fits."

"I guess she was like Eva Snow," said Julia. "Well, how did Betsey treat you next time, grandma?"

"Alas, my child, I never saw her again!

She kissed me when I went away, and there were tears in her eyes. *I* said, 'Good bye, Betsey,' and looked back at her through the dingy little chaise-window till she faded into a speck. And that was the last I ever saw of my darling friend. Father gave me that clock-reel to pay me for my miserable visit. It was a great deal easier to use than a hand-reel, and I liked it better.

"We moved away into this state afterwards; and just as Betsey was growing old enough to go into company, her health failed, and she died of consumption.

"Ruth wrote my sister Judith that she changed very much after she was sick. She could never forgive herself for spoiling my visit. She said, 'Tell Polly to meet me in heaven; I shan't have any sulky fits there.'"

There was a long pause. Grandma rocked and mended the red and green stars in the bed-quilt, but nobody spoke till Flaxie Frizzle exclaimed,—

“Why, *grandma*! There’s a tear a-rolling down your cheek, but your face is all smiled up.”

“Yes,” replied grandma, softly, as if talking to herself, “I’m thinking how glad I shall be next time to go and see Betsey.”

CHAPTER XII.

FLAXIE'S BRACELETS.

WHEN the children returned from Grandpa Pressy's, Flaxie declared they had had the "bestest visit." For the rest of the winter she was a pretty good girl, and learned to sew patch-work a little, and to read small stories in picture-books.

The next summer she had a baby brother, a funny little fellow, who did nothing but sleep and twist himself into queer shapes. They called him Philip Lally Gray.

Flaxie loved this baby dearly, and was never happier than when he was put in her lap to be held.

The next winter she went to school; and it was about this time that she fell into a bad habit of teasing.

But I think I will let Mrs. Prim tell of this. Mrs. Prim was a straight and proper lady who lived near New York city, not far from Dr. Gray's. She had no children of her own; but, as I have told you, she knew just how children ought to behave.

And here she begins:—

MRS. PRIM TALKS.

Miss Flaxie Frizzle lives in a beautiful house. It has bay-windows and flowers, and a piano. It has a white and yellow cat, and a closet full of playthings, and a splendid black dog. It has a rocking-horse, and a nice girl in the kitchen, called Dora, who never scolds, and only says, "There, now, see what you've done, little

Miss," when Flaxie spills a bowl of gravy over the table-cloth.

It is really a beautiful home, and I ought to have said the very first thing, it has a dear father and mother in it, a sister and two brothers, and cupboards full of things to eat.

Shouldn't you think Flaxie Frizzle would be ever so happy?

But she isn't.

In the first place, I couldn't see why. Everybody else was happy. Dora laughed half the time; Preston whistled; the baby cooed, and the cat purred. Good times in that house for everybody but Flaxie Frizzle. What was the matter with *her*?

The first I knew about it was a year ago, when I went there visiting, just after I came home from Canada.

"Where's Miss Frizzle?" said I. For

she had always been the cunningest little thing, and I loved her.

Her mother told me she had gone to school. I laughed, for I didn't know she was big enough. I thought it was only day before yesterday she had been a baby.

"I hoped it would please her to go to school with other children," said Mrs. Gray; "but it doesn't; I don't know what ails the child."

"I know," said Dr. Gray. „A great grim giant has got hold of our Pinky Pearly. You'll see him, Mrs. Prim, if you stay long enough."

I didn't understand what Dr. Gray meant; though of course I knew it wasn't a flesh-and-blood giant, only some kind of trouble that made her unhappy.

But I heard Flaxie Frizzle coming, so I ran out to kiss her. She was crying, and

there was a wrinkle in the middle of her forehead, deep enough to pour water in.

"Why, darling, what is it?" said I.

"Pitty well, I thank you," answered Flaxie Frizzle; and then she buried the big wrinkle in her "pogget-hangerfiss," and that was the last I saw of it for as much as two minutes.

"The giant has got along," said Dr. Gray, to me; but he didn't say a word to Flaxie Frizzle.

I felt very sorry for her, she seemed to be in such deep trouble.

"Come and tell me all about it dear.

Who's abused my little pet?"

She sobbed so hard she could not answer me at first; but by and by she said,—

"I don't want to go to schoo-ool. Haven't got nuff-nuffin to wear!"

I tried not to laugh, for Dr. Gray laughed, and that made Flaxie Frizzle sob all the harder. But really, if you could have seen the pretty red dress she had on, and the cloak with such a cunning hood and cape to it lined with scarlet flannel, you would have wondered what more the child wanted to wear. I found out very soon.

“The gyurls to school have shell bracelets on, every single which gyurl,” said she, in a choked voice, as if she had a pillow over her mouth. “Two of ’em, mamma; each on both arms; and none o’ their arms bare but just me!”

“Seems to me I’ve heard of this before,” said Dr. Gray. “I thought the bracelet question was settled, mamma. Didn’t you tell her” —

“Yes,” said Mrs. Gray, “I told Flaxie

her aunt Jane was going to bring her a bracelet."

"But she didn't come that day with the bracelet, mamma, and she hasn't come *ever since!*"

"No, dear, but she's coming this afternoon."

Flaxie Frizzle actually looked out of her "hangerfiss" and smiled. I thought the shower was clearing off; but next minute she asked,—

"What kind o' bracelet, mamma?"

"Black beads."

"O, dear, that's the *wrongest* kind! Isn't it nuffin but a single *one* bracelet? I wanted two of 'em. Beads isn't *fashion*, mamma!"

Mrs. Gray took the weeping child by the hand, and led her out of the room. That was the last I saw of her till dinner

time. She was calm then, and passed her plate twice for chicken, but her eyes were rather red.

I pitied her so that I slipped out in the afternoon, and went to a store where they kept bracelets. The man said, as Flaxie Frizzle did, that shell was all the fashion then. He had sold about a bushel that day, and had only one pair left. Then I thought how very hard it must be to live without bracelets, and hoped no other little girl had suffered so much as Flaxie Frizzle.

“I’ll make a happy child of her, and kill that giant dead,” said I.

So I bought the last pair, and gave them to her before she went to school. She screamed for joy, and the wrinkle danced off in a minute.

I went home and told my husband I

had made somebody happy with ten cents, and he said he was glad. — But there, I must tell you the rest!

I went to Mrs. Gray's three weeks afterward, and Flaxie Frizzle was crying again!

I declare I felt discouraged! She had broken my shell bracelets, and had had two new pairs, and some black ones, too. And what do you think that child was teasing for now?

A gold one!

“O, yes, mamma, a gold bracelet! The girls in the third and fourth classes have 'em. Each on *one* arm, now truly. None o' their arms bare but just me!”

“Are you in the third and fourth classes, you little goosie?” said I.

“No'm, but I can spell words! And O, my cousin Gussie's got a gold watch.

Cost more'n a bracelet. O, dear, with a chain to it."

"She's had the crying age, and now she's got the teasing age," said Mrs. Gray, aside to me.

"Teasing and crying seem to go together, laughed the doctor.

"Mamma, mayn't I? Say, mayn't I?"

"Flaxie Frizzle," said I, out of all patience, "you used to have a little darling rosy face; but now it's snarled up in a hard knot, worse than your hair. I don't wonder they've stopped calling you Pinky Pearly! Grumpy Growly is the best name *I* know of for *you*."

"We'll have to take her out of school," said Dr. Gray, shaking his finger. "She wants to ruin her papa, and tease all the money out of his pockets."

"I'm afraid that old Giant will eat her

all up and up," said I, frowning very hard at Flaxie Frizzle. "I know what his name is now, it's *Mayn't I, mamma?*"

I hadn't heard her say much but "*Mayn't I, mamma?*" since I came home from Canada.

I had never scolded Flaxie Frizzle before, and it mortified her so that she went into her "pogget-hangerfiss," as far as she could get.

I will let her stay there while I talk some more, for she can't tease when her mouth is covered up, and I want to tell you about her Christmas Day.

CHAPTER XIII.

FLAXIE'S CHRISTMAS.

MRS. PRIM TALKS.

"I DON'T know what I shall do with Flaxie Frizzle," said Mrs. Gray, holding the camphor to her nose.

"You mean you don't what you should do without her," said I.

The door opened, and Flaxie Frizzle came in like a little gray cloud.

"What is the matter, precious child?"

"I'm sick," replied Flaxie Frizzle, feeling for her handkerchief, which wasn't in her pocket.

"Sick, you little rosy thing? Do you cough?" said I.

"No 'm."

"Do you stay in bed?"

"No 'm, only jus' nights."

"Then how do you know you're sick?"

"'Cause I take *mederson*."

"Is it bad?"

"No 'm, only water *mederson*, with powders in."

"She did have a wee bit of a cold in her nose," said Mrs. Gray, "but it's all gone now. Flaxie Frizzle is going to have a party this afternoon, Mrs. Prim, and that's what ails her."

"How sad," said I. "No wonder she looks unhappy."

"I'm going to use my new gold and white tea-set, came las' night on the tree. Dodo's makin' little tinty Parker's rolls, big's a cent, with butter in the middle."

"Parker House rolls? That's dreadful

to begin with. Now let's hear the rest of your trials," said I.

"I want sumpin different 'n what she's doing," groaned Flaxie Frizzle. "I want *Miss Atkins's* bread."

"Now please tell me who is Miss Atkins? And can she make bread any nicer than your Dodo? I should be glad to know."

"She means 'milk emptins' bread," said Mrs. Gray, smiling, "she ate it last summer at her aunt's."

"And mamma won't let me have no pink *i-scream* nor *scarlet rooch*" (Charlotte Russe), sniffed Flaxie Frizzle, running round and round after her handkerchief like a kitty after its tail.

"You poor afflicted child," said I, wiping her eyes. "I've a great mind to put you in my cloak pocket and carry you off.

May I, Mrs. Gray? O Flaxie Frizzle, if you could only know how you make your mamma's head ache!"

"I'm sure you can't want her," sighed Mrs. Gray, lying back on the sofa pillows, with a worn-out look that ought to have cut Flaxie Frizzle right to the heart, but didn't.

"Yes, I do want her," said I. "I'm going to the city, to the Howard Mission to see those children eat the best dinner that ever was cooked."

The wrinkles left Flaxie's forehead, and the dimples danced into her cheeks.

"Mayn't I go, mamma?"

"Do you think you can keep from crying," said I. She laughed, for by that time she had on her cunning blue bonnet, and her blue cloak, and her nice warm furs, and thought she should never shed another tear as long as she lived.

“Because I can’t take a crying little girl among those happy children,” said I; “they never had trouble, like yours, and wouldn’t know what it meant.”

We went to New York and took a car to the Astor House, and then we walked down to the Old Bowery. There was no noise in the street, except the blowing of little boys’ trumpets and horns: it seemed just like Sunday.

At last we came to an old building, which Flaxie Frizzle thought was not pretty at all, and went up some stairs.

“Hark, who’s singing? Is’t the happy children? What makes ’em so happy?”

“Well, dear, for *one* thing they get bread and molasses *almost* every day of their lives.”

Flaxie Frizzle stared.

“Why, I don’t never eat ’lasses,” said

she. We were just going into a large room, which made you think of a school-house. There was a desk at one end, and near it, two gentlemen and a pretty young lady, who all looked like teachers, and had blue ribbon on their left arms. They asked us to sit down with the other visitors, and we did. I should think there were more than a hundred children on raised seats at one side of the room, singing hymns, such as "I'm a Pilgrim and I'm a Stranger," "Happy Day," "We'll Gather at the River."

They had smooth hair and clean aprons; but as for being dressed like Flaxie Frizzle, they wern't. Why, she would have been ashamed to wear such frocks as theirs, making mud pies.

They sang pretty fast, being in a hurry, I suppose, for their presents, which hung

right before their eyes on a Christmas Tree. I knew what some of the children would get; for hadn't I taken home from Sabbath school last Sunday a big paper bag, with a picture of Santa Claus on it; and hadn't I filled that bag with tops and balls and mittens and sugar-plums, and half a pound of tea for somebody's mother? I knew who I hoped would get my bag;—it was a sober girl with a bunch on her back.

I looked at Flaxie, who sat very still, and said I, —

“Now would you like to go downstairs and see that very nice dinner, my love?”

She nodded her little blue bonnet. I asked a gentleman I knew to go with us. In a room below sat the smaller children, some of them not so old as Flaxie Frizzle, going through funny exercises with their little arms and feet, and chanting, —

“We'll all shake hands together,
As children *ought* to do.”

But they didn't do it, half of them ; they forgot it, or shook hands at the wrong time, or stamped their boots when they should have pretended to be washing their faces. Still, it was just as cunning, for all that.

The trouble was, they saw some kind ladies setting a long dinner-table right before their eyes, — O, such eager eyes!

“Come, Flaxie,” said I, “let's look in these plates ; I know the ladies won't care.”

In the first place, she was afraid to walk over a glass window there was in the floor ; but I told her it was strong and wouldn't break : it was made to be walked on, and also to give some light to the room underneath.

“Why, where’s the good things?” she whispered.

“Look,” said I, “in this plate; here’s a turkey’s drumstick.”

“But where’s the *breastings*, you know?”

Flaxie meant force-meat, or stuffing.

“What do they want of *breastings*?” said I, “they’ll be so pleased with cold turkey, they’ll want to laugh right out.”

“Well, where’s their *tatoes*?”

“Here’s some white bread, Flaxie Frizzle.”

“But I don’t see no *paternip*, nor *skosh*, nor *nunyuns*,” whispered Flaxie again; “nor no gravy. And isn’t there some pudding with plums in? I don’t see any.”

“Why, what do they want of pudding, these happy children? See, there’s a

stem of raisins or a nice apple on every plate, and a cookie. Just wait now, and see if they don't think it's the nicest dinner that ever was known."

Flaxie Frizzle's upper lip curled a very little. But while we were talking, there was a noise of many feet, and the upstairs children came marching in, two by two, like young soldiers, and stood in their places before the long table.

Ah, well, it was enough to make you laugh, and cry, too, to see how they ate, and how the wee ones stopped singing, and looked on from their seats as if they were dreadfully afraid the feast would all be gone before their turn came. I spoke to my little girl with a bunch on her back, and said I, —

"Did you ever see such a nice dinner before?"

She thought a minute, and then answered, with a piece of turkey in her mouth, —

“No, ma'am, I never.”

Then I said to Flaxie Frizzle, “There, didn't I tell you so?”

But she only opened her brown eyes very wide. Flaxie's eyes hadn't looked natural since we started.

“Some of the turkey came from your house,” said I. “Now if you've seen enough of this wonderful dinner, we'll go to another part of the house, and I'll show you something else.”

We went up some other stairs, and Flaxie saw long rows of little white beds.

“Who sleeps in 'em?” said she.

“Some of the happy children you've seen. Those who have no beds of their

own, and no homes. It is so nice not to have to sleep in the street, isn't it, Flaxie Frizzle?"

Flaxie looked as puzzled as if I had been talking Chinese; but I noticed she hadn't whined once since we started from home.

We went to a room, and I knocked on the door. "Come in," said a voice; and there, on a woman's lap, lay a little baby, with a bottle at its mouth.

"She hasn't any mother," said I.

"How defful!" exclaimed Flaxie Frizzle.

"Yes, so it is," said I, looking straight into Flaxie's eyes. "But then, if she had a mother, she might, when she grew big enough to talk, tease and tease, and make her mother's head ache, and her heart too. Now she never can."

Flaxie Frizzle put her forefinger in her mouth.

“O, my sakes,” said Mrs. Smith, shaking her head at Flaxie, and turning up the baby’s bottle. “Little girls that have mothers, and nice warm houses to live in, and plenty to eat, how can they help being good?”

I thought Flaxie Frizzle was going to cry.

“Very true, ma’am; but if you’ll believe me, there’s a rich child in *Troy* who teases dreadfully,” said I; for I did not wish Mrs. Smith to think I meant Flaxie Frizzle.

“Ah! I don’t know anybody in *Troy*,” said Mrs. Smith; but she stopped looking at Flaxie Frizzle, and then Flaxie took her finger out of her mouth.

“Well, dear, what do you think of all

these children?" said I, when we were going home. "Don't you wish you had as much to make you happy as they have?"

Flaxie looked at me out of the corners of her eyes, but did not try to speak.

It did me some good, though, to hear that she did not whine for the rest of the day, and said nothing more about *i-scream*, *scarlet rooches*, and *Miss Atkins's* bread, and asked her mamma if she might give her twenty-five-cent scrip to the Howard Mission.

CHAPTER XIV.

FLAXIE'S PONY.

MRS. PRIM TALKS.

The next summer Mr. Prim and I borrowed Flaxie Frizzle and took her with us to a place near the sea-side. There we had a house, and a little bathing-tent of our own, and a pony, and a basket-wagon. Flaxie liked to be dipped in the ocean, and she liked to pick shells on the beach, but best of all she enjoyed a ride.

One morning Mr. Prim and I sat down to the breakfast-table without her.

"But, my dear," said Mr. Prim to me, "don't pour the coffee till she comes. I

like it better when she puts in the sugar."

My husband was very fond of Flaxie Frizzle, almost as fond of her as if she had been our own instead of "borrowed."

I didn't pour the coffee, and we waited at least five minutes, talking about the weather; and by that time Miss Frizzle came hurrying into the room with her hair a little wild. But she was not dancing, no, nor smiling, either.

"Good morning," said we.

"Good morning," said she. But I saw it was a bad morning inside of her heart. She sat down and picked her roll in pieces, and never thought to put the sugar in Mr. Prim's coffee till he passed her the cup.

"What has happened to our little Peach Blossom?" said he, stroking her curls. I shouldn't have asked her any questions. I

think it isn't best to notice children's little freaks, but Flaxie Frizzle answered very quickly: —

“When I waked up and found me in the blue chamber, I wished I'd slept somewhere else.”

“Why didn't she have her own room?” asked Mr. Prim.

“Because,” said I, looking straight at Flaxie, “she saw a mouse in the closet yesterday, and was so afraid of him that she begged me to put her in the blue chamber last night.”

“Then what is she making a fuss about?”

“I—I—well, I had to wear my rainy dress this morning,” said Flaxie, scowling at her blue and white gingham, and pulling at the cambric ruffle, which was hanging to the sleeve by a thread. “And everything I put on to me has a hole in it.”

By that time she had picked off the ruffle.

“Tut, tut,” said my husband, “there are no holes in your clothes, except for you to put your head into. Have some omelet in your plate, darling, and try to be happy.”

It was a pity he told her to try to be happy, for that always made her take her little handkerchief right out of her pocket. She took it out now, and looked at it very sorrowfully.

I knew just what the matter was with her, but my husband didn't. I shook my head at him, and tried to make him stop talking, but he didn't notice me, and went right on:—

“Let's see, what did your mamma write last night?”

“My mamma won't never let me have

nuffin, so there!" cried Flaxie Frizzle, sobbing outright. "They won't give me no pony to my house. O, dear! O, dear! Auntie Prim wrote it in a little letter that I wanted a pony. Mattie Smif's got one, goes round on the beach with it—a live one, cost six dollars!"

"Six dollars?"

"Yes, Mattie said so. But my mamma writes that I can't have no pony, no, never!"

That was the beginning and end of the whole matter. Flaxie Frizzle wanted a live pony, and a live pony she couldn't have. What put such a silly idea in her little frizzled head, I'm sure I don't know.

"She isn't a good mamma to me. O, dear, O, dear!"

Mr. Prim was so discouraged when he found she wasn't going to stop crying,

that he pushed back his plate, and said he must go right away.

But her crying didn't spoil my appetite in the least. I ate another roll, and considered what I'd better do with the child. Her parents had lent her to me with the hope that I would try to make her stop whining. They indulged her too much, and they knew it as well as I.

"Well, Miss Frizzle," said I, after breakfast, "I'll baste you some patchwork if you like."

But Flaxie Frizzle did not answer; she was crying into her handkerchief.

"I've talked to you all I ever shall about that pony, and if you cry any more you must cry up stairs in the blue chamber, with the door shut."

Flaxie Frizzle stared at me through her tears.

"My mamma don't never let me have nuffin," she began.

I pointed to the door. She dropped her eyes and turned to go.

"Wait a minute," said I. "If you can stop whining long enough, I'll take you to ride; and when we get home you may go up in the blue chamber and begin crying where you left off, and cry as hard as you please."

Flaxie Frizzle. did not know what to make of my talking so; but she was always glad of a ride; so she was ready before Sam came round with the horse; and you wouldn't have thought, to look at her, in her light blue merino dress and white hat with blue ribbons, that her heart was broken; for smiles were dancing all over her face.

We rode a long way, and then drove

into a yard in front of a great stone house.

“Who lives here?” asked Flaxie.

“A great many people,” said I.

When we went in, a sweet-looking girl with curls seemed glad to see us, for she knew me.

“The boys are having a recess,” said she; “but if you like I’ll take you into the kitchen and show you the gingerbread they have been baking.”

We went with her, and everything looked nice, for the boys had just washed the floors clean. The gingerbread was like anybody’s, only the sheets were so large, and there were so many of them.

Then we saw the tubs where the boys washed their own clothes; and after that a room where they made cunning little baby-shoes, and another room where they made chairs.

Flaxie Frizzle opened her eyes wide. She thought these must be very strange boys to do all these things. I did not tell her they were naughty boys, lest she should be afraid. But it was true that there were no children there who were good; it was a school for bad boys.

And when recess was over and they came into the house, I did not like the looks of their faces. I told the young lady we only came to see "the little one."

"O, yes," said she, "you mean Baby Brown.

So when they had all come into the house, she took us into the sewing-room where the smallest boys were sewing and knitting, and a woman was showing them how. There sat Baby Brown on the front seat. I went up and kissed him, for there was no bad look in *his* face, the little darling!

"Isn't he sweet?" said I to Flaxie.

She said yes, and that made him blush and drop a stitch.

"*My* brother don't know how to knit," said Flaxie Frizzle, "nor my papa."

"Please tell us about Baby Brown," said I, to the young lady, when we went out of the room. "Has he a father?"

"No, ma'am, and his mother is a very strange woman. She keeps a gin-shop, where bad men go and drink. They leave sugar in the bottoms of their tumblers, and Baby liked to drink it, when he lived at home. He didn't know any better; and once it made him really drunk! Some good men saw him lying on the doorstep, and were very sorry. But what made them sorriest of all was that his mamma didn't seem to mind it, and only laughed. They told her they meant to bring him

here to this Reform School, and she said she was willing, for he was only round in the way!"

"Only think of a mother's saying that," said I. Her child round in the way! But then *some* mothers and fathers don't care much about their children, *do* they, Flaxie Frizzle?"

Flaxie Frizzle looked up in surprise. She thought fathers and mothers always cared.

"I am glad they have got Baby away from home, and I hope you will try to make him a good little boy," said I, to the young lady.

"What does he drink in the tumble-ers?" asked Flaxie Frizzle.

"Sugar, with whiskey or gin in it," said the young lady.

"My mamma wouldn't let *me*," cried she in disgust, "'t isn't nice!"

